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ABSTRACT

Despite concerns of the early care and education field regarding the applicability of performance expectations for young children, the advent of standards-based K-12 education and the level of financial support for early education has fueled the development of standards regarding children's learning prior to kindergarten entry. This executive summary and research report present the findings of a national survey study examining how states have defined children's expectations, what content has been included, and how standards are being used. Data were collected from interviews with key informants in each state (early childhood specialist at the state departments of education, chief child care administrator in lead child care agencies, and president of state NAEYC affiliates) and a review of child-based outcome standards documents. Findings in the report and executive summary are organized in four categories: (1) review of states with child-based outcome (CBO) standards and description of standard content, including linkage with K-12 standards; (2) the standards development process, including process initiation, the players involved, and evolution of the process; (3) the status of standards activities in states without published standards; and (4) implementation of CBO standards, including where and how the standards are to be used, standards dissemination, and program accountability for using the standards. Recommendations relate to inconsistent nomenclature, inclusion, standards' content, standard development, use of CBO standards, and the real intentions for creating and using standards for young children. Four appendices to the full report contain the survey protocol, letter to respondents, descriptions of developmental dimensions, and child-based outcomes standards documents. (KB)

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Research Report

# Expanded Learning Opportunities National Leadership Area

**June 2003**

# STANDARDS FOR PRESCHOOL CHILDREN'S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT: WHO HAS STANDARDS, HOW WERE THEY DEVELOPED, AND HOW ARE THEY USED?

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# STANDARDS FOR PRESCHOOL CHILDREN'S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT: WHO HAS STANDARDS, HOW WERE THEY DEVELOPED, AND HOW ARE THEY USED?

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In Association with the School of Education
University of North Carolina at Greensboro

2003

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## SECTION I: BACKGROUND AND PURPOSES OF THE STUDY

### *Background of the Study*

Throughout the history of early care and education, the role of standards has been somewhat controversial. Reviewing decades of literature and theory, some scholars have noted that standards, in the form of clear expectations for children, have provided an underpinning for early childhood curriculum and pedagogy. This school of thought often points to the seminal works of Froebel, Pestalozzi, and Gesell, noting that while not terming them standards, per se, and while differing in their goals for children, these theorists had definite understandings of what children should know and do that informed their developmental theories and expectations.

Others, however, see history somewhat differently. They contend that while theorists may have *implied* the existence of standards for what children should know and be able to do, they never *explicitly stated* or listed them. This school contends it is recent history and, more specifically, the brain research coupled with the K–12 pre-occupation with standards that has infiltrated early care and education. As a result, there is a need for specification of what children can and should know and be able to do.

However heated these debates, what both sides might agree upon is that early care and education has long had program standards enunciating the structural and physical conditions that enhance quality in early childhood programs. Unlike child-based learning standards, program standards are not controversial in and of themselves, except perhaps in their individual items. The need for program standards, for example Head Start's Performance Standards, is readily acknowledged and encouraged.

Moving from historic to more current times, the debate about the need for, and utility of, child-based learning standards for preschool-aged children has, in the past decade, been no less strident. A number of factors contribute to concerns over the development of standards to articulate expectations for children's development before kindergarten entry. First and foremost is the nature of development at this age. Preschool children's development often is uneven across developmental areas, with development in one area outpacing development in others. Furthermore, development often is sporadic. A child may make relatively little progress in one developmental area for a significant period of time and then suddenly master a series of skills or demonstrate more advanced characteristics almost overnight. Additionally, children's development is highly influenced by the environment, and the environments in which children at this age find themselves are highly variable. Young children's family, recreational, and educational environments vary widely in the type of values and characteristics they promote. Therefore, the skills, abilities, and characteristics children exhibit may be more of a function of their environment than their own abilities. All of these factors contribute to great individual differences between children—differences that experts in the field of early education say should be anticipated and valued. However, the presence of such individual differences between children does not lend itself well to the promulgation of standards that tend to describe more uniform expectations for children's development, or even are designed to lead toward more uniform outcomes among children.

Additional concerns about the advent of standards for children's learning and development stem from the nature of the field of early care and education. Professionals in the field of early care and education have long recognized the value of a child-initiated approach in educational settings. Classrooms have been set up to give children choices among centers. Teachers and caregivers have been encouraged to follow the child's lead in designing curricula activities. It is possible that the introduction of standards for

children's learning and development might shift the balance more toward teacher-directed approaches.

Despite these concerns, the press for child-based learning standards has grown rapidly and with fervor. Indeed, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education (NAECS/SDE) have published a new position statement that will be helpful to states as they craft standards (2002). The position statement addresses the process that should be used to develop early learning standards, the content of such standards, and how the standards should be used. Clearly, interest in the standards issue remains intense for a variety of reasons.

To be certain, as noted above, factors in the educational environment and in the political environments have hastened the urgency of the standards discourse. For the past decade, for example, the push to define expectations for student learning has swept the nation. Commonly referred to as the standards or accountability movement, state-level agencies and organizations across the country have been required to develop standards to define what children should learn in grades K–12. Almost all states have developed some type of standards to define what children should learn in school, and these agencies and organizations are designing and implementing assessment systems to measure children's progress toward meeting these standards. Given this ethos, it is not surprising that calls for accountability have begun to characterize early care and education.

A second impetus to the call for standards arose because of the widespread growth of early childhood programs in the late 1990s. In 1998–1999, for example, state spending on pre-kindergarten initiatives totaled approximately $1.7 billion, up approximately $1 billion from 1992–1993 (Schulman, Blank, & Ewen, 1999). According to a recent report by *Education Week*, 39 states plus the District of Columbia operate state-funded pre-kindergarten programs and 21 states plus the District of Columbia provide supplemental funding to expand the Head Start services available in their states (Doherty, 2002). Such expansion was not required; it represented a voluntary expenditure of public dollars. Adding to the accountability press of the K–12 standards movement, came the desire on the part of public officials to see if the increasing dollars invested in early care and education were making a difference to children's outcomes in general.

Finally, the impetus for standards in early care and education can also be traced to intensifying concerns about the growing educational divide between poor and non-poor children—the achievement gap. With early childhood education regarded as a major antidote, politicians and the public became increasingly concerned that early care and education programs were actually delivering on this hope. Hence, the press for accountability in early care and education has many roots.

How are these manifesting themselves? A significant national effort to define expectations for children's development prior to kindergarten entry came with the advent of the National Education Goals Panel (NEGP) in 1989. The importance of the early years for later school success was pronounced clearly and acknowledged by most of the nation's educators and policymakers when the nation's first goal was established—"All children will enter school ready to learn by the year 2000." A national panel of experts was established to further define what it means to enter school "ready to learn." After extensive reviews of the literature, the panel agreed (and received national consensus) that readiness attributes can be classified into five domains: (1) physical well-being and motor development, (2) social and emotional development, (3) cognition and general knowledge, (4) approaches toward learning, and (5) language and communication (Kagan, Moore, & Bredekamp, 1995). The work of the NEGP helped to set the stage for

further discussion on item operationalization of these dimensions. It should be noted that the panel was quite clear in articulating that educators should expect a great deal of cultural and individual variation in children's development at this age and should not expect each child to exhibit specific skills and abilities prior to kindergarten.

In addition, the NEGP recognized that readiness was not a construct of the child alone and that in order for children to be ready for schools, their families and communities needed to support them and schools needed to be ready for them. These principles were embodied in the objectives that accompanied the overall goal. These objectives were as follows: (a) every child would have access to quality early care and education experiences, (b) every parent would be equipped to facilitate their child's development, and (c) every child would receive the nutrition, physical experiences, and health care needed (NEGP, 1997).

The next national press for addressing expectations for preschool-age children's development came when Congress mandated that in 1998 Head Start programs begin collecting data on children's progress on specific indicators related to language and literacy development. The Head Start Bureau established a Technical Work Group on Child Outcomes and charged the group with developing a framework for collecting data on children's progress. The result was the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework, which includes eight developmental domains, seven Domain Elements, and 100 examples of more specific Indicators of children's skills, abilities, knowledge, and behaviors. Head Start programs are required to collect data on children's progress three times each year and to use the data for program decisions. Clearly, the Outcomes Framework articulates expectations for what children will accomplish while they are in Head Start and, perhaps more significantly, specifies requirements for assessing the progress made by groups of children within the program (Head Start Bureau, 2001).

Subsequently, the Bush Administration's *Good Start, Grow Smart* early childhood initiative has called for annual assessments of all children in Head Start and the specification of learning standards that specify expectations for children's development prior to kindergarten (*Good Start, Grow Smart*, 2002). In an effort to strengthen the impact of early care and education programs, *Good Start, Grow Smart* identifies several factors that may lessen early care and education program benefits for children. The initiative identifies potential areas of improvement, including the lack of alignment between what is expected of children prior to kindergarten and state standards for the K–12 education system, as well as the limited efforts to evaluate early care and education programs on how well they have prepared children for success in school. It outlines a three-pronged approach to improving early care and education programs, with two of the three objectives related to standards for early care and education programs. One strategy Bush proposes to strengthen the Head Start program is to ensure that Head Start programs are evaluated based on their track record in helping children meet the standards established for early learning (i.e., the Child Outcomes Framework). Secondly, the initiative seeks to encourage states to develop quality criteria for early care and education programs, including voluntary guidelines for preschool children's language and literacy development that are aligned with the state's K–12 standards. In order to receive federal Child Care Development Funds (CCDF), states will have to submit a plan for how they will address this requirement for criteria for quality early care and education programs (*Good Start, Grow Smart*, 2002).

Clearly, demands for standards to address what children should know and be able to do before kindergarten entry are becoming increasingly strong. As the demand becomes more ardent, recalling past eras, so do opinions regarding the viability and utility of standards. Arguments supporting child-based outcome standards suggest that appropriate

assessment and learning standards are both beneficial and necessary to the field of early care and education, exposing the kinds of services and supports often missing in a child's preschool years. This thinking emanates from two primary sources: (1) the desire to improve children's performance later in school by articulating desirable elements of learning during the preschool years, and (2) the desire to have better articulation of what children are learning (or accountability) for the fiscal and human resources that are being invested in early care and education programs. Still, some members of the early care and education community maintain that standards setting is not appropriate for children of this young age or that such standards, if enacted, must be done so with a great deal of care. It should be noted, however, that while this attitude does exist, early childhood administrators—as the study will reveal—are recognizing the benefits of, and are becoming more comfortable with, child-based learning outcomes. Irrespective of attitudinal differences, data are unequivocal; standards are being developed and used every day in this nation. Our study examines them in detail, with the goal of providing clear information and with the caveat that such information changes daily.

## Purposes of the Study

While there is increasing recognition of the importance of early learning experiences prior to kindergarten entry, there is actually little consensus on what specific skills and characteristics early care and education programs should promote during the preschool years. Efforts to guide early care and education programs have primarily outlined standards for program operations and curricula rather than specific skills expected from children. Without national consensus on what young children should know and be able to do, numerous state agencies and organizations have developed their own descriptions of what preschool children should learn. Thus, policymakers have responded to the particular educational and political climate of their states—in addition to a national push for more stringent accountability and a sharper delineation of outcomes—by developing standards for children prior to kindergarten entry.

This study was prompted by the absence of a national report or comprehensive source of data delineating how individual states are responding to the need for early learning standards. SERVE, a Regional Educational Laboratory funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Institute for Education Sciences (formerly the Office of Educational Research and Improvement), has partnered with Dr. Sharon Lynn Kagan of Teachers College, Columbia University and Yale University to conduct a national study to examine early learning standards developed by state-level organizations. The broad purpose of the study is to provide data on what standards have been developed, the processes states have used to develop the standards, and how states are using/implementing the standards. It should be noted that this component of the study does not contain a thorough content analysis of the standards; rather, it provides a more global perspective on their content as it addresses the following specific research questions:

- Which states have developed child-based outcome standards to define expectations for children's learning and development prior to kindergarten entry, and how many sets of standards does each state have?
- What is the nature of the child-based outcome standards that have been developed? What ages have been covered in the standards? To what degree are the standards linked to standards for the K–12 system? What developmental domains or subject areas have been covered?
- What process was used to develop the standards? What was the impetus for developing the standards? What agency or individual took the lead in the process? Who was involved? How was the effort funded?

- How are the child-based outcome standards used? How are they disseminated and to whom? What are the expectations for how the standards will be implemented? What data are collected related to the standards?

Answers to these and other questions provide a comprehensive view of the status of standards for children's learning and development prior to kindergarten entry. The goal is to provide a picture for how states have addressed an increasing call for child-based outcome standards. What follows is a discussion of data collected on child-based outcome standards from across the country and an attempt to draw a coherent picture of patterns that seem to be emerging as states enter (or do not enter) into the arena of standards for children younger than kindergarten age. We begin by presenting the methodology and conceptual framework used in the study (Section II). This is followed in Section III by a discussion of the characteristics of the child-based outcome standards that have been developed by state-level organizations. Sections IV and V present the processes states have used to develop the standards. In Section IV, we focus on states that have completed their standards, and in Section V, we examine states that are still developing standards and states where the process has not yet begun. In Section VI, we examine how the child-based outcome standards are being implemented and used. The concluding portion, Section VII, provides a synthesis of the findings from the study and presents recommendations for the care and education of young children.

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## SECTION II: STUDY NOMENCLATURE, METHODOLOGY, AND LIMITATIONS

Embarking on an analysis of standards at any time is a complex undertaking. Undertaking such an analysis when the child-based outcome standards are highly visible and constantly changing complicates the challenge and makes the need for explication of our nomenclature and method critical. In this section, we provide information about how the study was conducted, define the terms used throughout and the rationale for their selection, and discuss the limitations of the study. This section is divided into two parts: the first on Nomenclature and the second on Method.

### *Nomenclature*

In order to effectively communicate the intentions of this study, a set of common definitions was developed. It should be noted, however, that terms used herein are not proffered as definitions for use beyond the study unless readers feel so inclined.

*The definition of standards.* The definition of standards has received much attention in K–12 education, with the field often discerning between content and performance standards. In early care and education, however, use of the word "standards" has been linked to program performance standards or the inputs that lead to quality programs, with the most notable example being the Head Start Performance Standards.

For the purposes of this study, "child-based outcome (CBO) standards" are defined as state-based expectations for what young children should know and be able to do prior to entering kindergarten. Within the field of early care and education, this type of standard has many different names, including early learning standards, child outcomes, benchmarks, and performance indicators, just to mention a few. We have selected the term child-based outcome standards to clearly indicate that this analysis is about child standards as opposed to program standards, and about outcomes rather than inputs.

It should be noted that, despite repeated attempts to define the nature of the standards being considered, there was some confusion among respondents regarding the terminology. While this confusion reflects the state of the field, it needs to be noted as a factor in this study. First, and commensurate with past usage, it was not uncommon for respondents to think of "standards" in terms of expectations for programs, not children. Second, a few respondents indicated that their state did not have CBO standards. Upon further inquiry, we learned that such standards did in fact exist. We also learned that this error was often due to inconsistent nomenclature rather than a lack of accurate information.

Because so much confusion about terminology exists, we found it helpful to clarify our definition by indicating what is *not* included in it. When discussing child-based outcome standards we are not speaking about, for example, access to services (e.g., how many children have access to a particular service), the nature of those services (e.g., high-quality programs), or supports rendered by parents (e.g., reading to children). That is to say, we are not studying service provision like that provided in the important Kids Count work or the Quality Counts edition of *Education Week* (September, 2001). Moreover, we are not speaking about social indicators, those variables typically related to the condition of children or families (e.g., numbers of children who live in poverty). This study focuses on child-based outcome standards, with the goal of explicating the nature of those standards and what states are doing to develop them.



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*Age of children whose standards are included in the study.* In this study, we are examining CBO standards for children from birth to the age of school entry. In reality, however, the CBO standards that exist for this population are more heavily focused on children as they approach entry to formal school. Consequently, the bulk of our data is focused on standards for children ages three to five, prior to kindergarten entry. Where we have information on standards for younger children, we will note specific ages.

*States.* While the definition of what constitutes a state seems fairly straightforward, it is complex in this study for several reasons. It is not simply that we have included the District of Columbia as a state, which we deem appropriate. Logic might suggest that the number of sets of standards would parallel the number of states that have them. Yet, equating the number of states with the number of sets of standards quickly reveals that no such one-to-one correspondence exists. To the contrary, our work revealed that while the states (including DC) were the unit of analysis, some states actually had more than one set of standards that were suitable for inclusion in the study. For this reason, sometimes the total number of states that have standards (27) differs from the total number of sets of standards that are included in our analysis (29). This difference is not an error; to be thorough and to accurately reflect the range of work in existence, if two sets of child-based outcome standards exist in a state, both are reported herein. As will be noted later, this difference, while a bit complex for this analysis, reveals some trenchant issues with which the field of early care and education must grapple if standards are to be the most effective.

In addition to the phenomena of multiple sets of standards within a few states, we also had multiple informants within several states. For the most part, information provided by the multiple respondents within a state was consistent. In a few cases, however, information provided by one respondent differed from information provided by another. In these cases, respondents were re-contacted to verify the accuracy of information for the study and the standards documents themselves were analyzed to provide further verification of what is presented. However, this phenomena further accentuates the fact that even though we have treated each state as the unit of analysis to facilitate reporting, within states there can be multiple perspectives on standards development activities and even multiple standards. We are fully aware that even though we talk about states as if they were a single unit, there are sometimes variations within states.

## *Methodology*

This descriptive study utilized data from multiple sources to gain a picture of CBO standards within each state. Telephone survey data were augmented by reviews and analysis of CBO standards documents submitted by the states. Findings from the telephone survey and from preliminary review of the standards documents submitted by the states are included in this report. It should be noted that a more detailed content analysis of the standards will follow the publication of this document.

It was important to collect data from multiple sources for several reasons. We wanted to gain as much data from as many different perspectives as possible, within a reasonable time frame. We had observed that states currently had a variety of CBO standards development activities and that the development process often unfolded rapidly within states. We suspected that there would be multiple perspectives and different levels of understanding of the process within states. We wanted to capture as full a picture of the process as possible. Therefore, a design using several different kinds of data sources (multiple telephone surveys and standards document reviews) was appropriate.

*Content of the telephone protocol.* The telephone protocol was developed to learn about states' efforts at developing and implementing CBO standards. Domains of inquiry in the protocol included: (a) the impetus for the standards, (b) the nature of the standards, (c) their relationship to other standards efforts, and (d) the process of their development including issues related to leadership, participation, and funding. We also were interested in how the needs of special populations were addressed in the standards, the developmental domains covered by the standards, and how the standards were being implemented. Our inquiry addressed the following categories:

- Presence or absence of state-level CBO standards for children between the ages of birth and five years
- Content areas of the standards
- Process for developing the standards
- Process for disseminating or implementing the standards
- Data collection systems related to the standards
- For states that do not have CBO standards, any plans or activities that might lead to the development of CBO standards

*Development and refinement of the telephone protocol.* A draft protocol was prepared, reviewed by the research team, and then reviewed by experts within the field of early care and education. Revisions were made and then the protocol was piloted with four states. Revisions were made based on the pilot so that the protocol would meet our intention to create a tool that would stimulate discourse, not limit it. As a result, many of the questions are quite open-ended, often followed with specific probes. A copy of the final protocol is included in Appendix A.

*Respondent selection.* Discerning who would be the best respondents to the survey raised additional questions. Given the cadre of early care and education leaders in each state and given the multiple funding streams and programs, we felt it would be important to gain multiple perspectives from each state. As a result, three categories of individuals were interviewed in each state: (a) the early childhood specialist in the state department of education, (b) the president of the state Association for the Education of Young Children (AEYC), and (c) the chief Child Care Administrator in the state's Lead Child Care Agency. The strategy of collecting data from these diverse sources worked well, in that these sources often provided quite different knowledge bases, perspectives, and data sources.

*Quality control of data collection.* The actual data collection was performed by two people: a graduate student at Teachers College, Columbia University, and a staff person at the National Center for Children and Families at Teachers College, Columbia University. Both data collectors have completed graduate-level course work in the field of early care and education and have extensive experience in data collection. Each took responsibility for different states, ensuring that appropriate contacts and follow-ups were made. Working under the supervision of Sharon Lynn Kagan, these individuals were engaged in ongoing conversations with each other regarding ways to improve the data collection process.

*Data collection processes.* Initial contact was made through a letter to respondents (see Appendix B for a copy of the letter). The letter explained the purpose of the survey and provided a copy of the questions that would be addressed during the interview. Approximately two weeks after the letter was mailed to a respondent, a phone contact was made to schedule an appointment for the interview. During the interview, participants were asked to respond to a series of open-ended and closed-ended questions to describe any CBO standards activities in their state. The interviews were conducted

between November 2001 and May 2002. A written summary of each interview was completed and either e-mailed or faxed to respondents so that they could provide suggested changes for the write-up and then approve the way the write-up reflected their conversation with the researcher.

Respondents were asked to forward copies of CBO standards documents to the research team, along with any supplemental materials that might be available to support implementation of the standards. Materials were received from each of the states reporting that their state has CBO standards. Interview responses regarding the name of the standards, the age groups addressed, and the developmental domains and subject areas covered were confirmed by examination of the standards documents and any web-based materials the respondent provided. In cases where the interview responses differed slightly from the print or web-based document, data from the print or web-based materials have been reported. In cases where the interview responses differed substantially from the print or web-based materials, the interview respondent was re-contacted to verify the accuracy of the data.

*Respondents providing data for the study.* A total of 177 persons were contacted as potential respondents for the survey. Seventy-seven persons were able to provide data regarding CBO standards in their state. The remainder either indicated that their states did not have CBO standards or that they were not informed sufficiently to answer the questions about their states' CBO standards. Table II-1 provides a summary, by role category, of persons who provided data for the survey. The observation that the early childhood specialists within state departments of education were typically the persons who could provide information about the CBO standards and the development process is one important observation to note. Fifty of the 77 respondents who were able to answer questions about the CBO standards in their states were early childhood specialists in state departments of education. In contrast, a total of 100 persons who were contacted were unable to provide data for the study. Only 12 of the non-respondents were early childhood state specialists; 48 were child care administrators in departments of human services, and 40 were AEYC representatives. These data suggest that early childhood specialists in state departments of education are, as a whole, the group with the greatest amount of information about the CBO standards in their states.

Table II-1

*List of Respondents Providing Data for the Survey*

| State | Early Childhood Specialist | Child Care Administrator | AEYC Representative |
|---|---|---|---|
| Alabama | | | X |
| Alaska | X | X | X |
| Arizona | X | | |
| Arkansas | X | | X |
| California | X | | |
| Colorado | X | | X |
| Connecticut | XXX* | | |
| Delaware | X | X | |
| Florida | X | X | |
| Georgia | XX* | X | X |
| Hawaii | X | X | |
| Idaho | X | | X |

| State | Early Childhood Specialist | Child Care Administrator | AEYC Representative |
|---|---|---|---|
| Illinois | XX* | | X |
| Indiana | X | | |
| Iowa | X | | X |
| Kansas | X | | |
| Kentucky | X | | |
| Louisiana | XX* | | X |
| Maine | X | X | |
| Maryland | X | | |
| Massachusetts | X | | X |
| Michigan | X | | |
| Minnesota | X | | X |
| Mississippi | X | | |
| Missouri | X | | |
| Montana | | X | |
| Nebraska | X | | |
| Nevada | X | | X |
| New Hampshire | X | | |
| New Jersey | X | | X |
| New Mexico | X | | |
| New York | X | | |
| North Carolina | X | | |
| North Dakota | | X | |
| Ohio | X | X | |
| Oklahoma | X | | |
| Oregon | X | | |
| Pennsylvania | X | | |
| Rhode Island | X | | |
| South Carolina | X | | |
| South Dakota | | X | |
| Tennessee | X | | |
| Texas | X | | |
| Utah | X | | |
| Vermont | X | | |
| Virginia | X | | |
| Washington | X | | X |
| Washington, DC | | X | |
| West Virginia | X | X | |
| Wisconsin | | X | |
| Wyoming | X | | |
| Total Number of Respondents Providing Data | 50 | 13 | 14 |

* Multiple respondents within the same category from the same state

*Data analysis procedures.* Quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques were used to extract themes or commonalities among the states. For the quantitative

analysis, two primary strategies were used: (1) counts of the number of CBO standards that exhibited the specific characteristics examined or the numbers of respondents who reported a given response, and (2) ratings of CBO standards on various scales that were developed to describe the nature of the standards (such as the degree to which the standards were linked to the K–12 standards).

In each of the cases when a rating scale was used, ratings were defined as explicitly as possible and then the CBO standards were rated by two independent raters. Both of the data coders had extensive educational training in the fields of early care and education, one with a doctoral degree and the second with graduate-level training. For each of the rating scales, the coders carefully studied the elements of the particular characteristic to be coded and discussed criteria for particular ratings. Following this training period, the coders rated the CBO standards included in the study for each of the respective scales. Reliability for the ratings was established by comparing the results from the two raters. In all cases, the two raters achieved agreement on all but one or two of the cases (reliability rates of 94% or better). In cases where the two raters disagreed on a particular rating, consensus was achieved on the appropriate rating and the agreed-upon rating was used as the data within the study.

Qualitative analytic methods were used to analyze responses to the open-ended interview questions. Recognizing the interplay between qualitative and quantitative methods (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), the research team studied the interview responses carefully, looking for emerging patterns, themes, and categories. A coding system was developed, and data were sorted according to "families of codes" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 171). As a particular theme was identified, the team looked for consistency across multiple respondents within a state and then evidence of the theme in respondents' answers across multiple states. Wherever possible, charts were developed and interview quotes provided to illustrate the finding. In cases where direct quotes from respondents are used to illustrate a point, the quote has been separated from the narrative text and indented. In all instances, these quotes are direct quotes from respondents. Quotes have not been attributed to individual respondents, other than to identify the respondents' home state.

### *Limitations of This Study*

There are several factors that impact the data collected and the conclusions drawn for this study. Although fairly obvious, the research team felt it necessary to state that results from this study are only as good as the data provided by respondents. As described above, there seems to be considerable confusion about the definition of CBO standards, and knowledge about CBO standards within some states may be limited. We have attempted to collect data from as many of the persons likely to know about CBO standards within a state as possible. Still, we may have missed someone who is knowledgeable about a CBO standards initiative within a particular state and/or been unsuccessful in explaining the purpose of the study and collecting accurate data on CBO standards from respondents. At the same time, data provided by respondents heavily involved in the development of CBO standards may be somewhat biased by their role within the process. Additionally, data were collected from persons who, for the most part, are in administrative positions. Therefore, while respondents have provided data on implementation of the standards, the data are second-hand knowledge of how the standards are actually being used. Clearly, the study is limited to respondents' unique perspective and level of knowledge about CBO standards.

A second limitation of the study is that the process of developing and using CBO standards is a "moving target." In all cases, we have collected data at a specific point in time. The interviews were conducted between November 2001 and May 2002. Thus, the

data we report reflect where the states were at the time of their interviews. Because the process is a "moving target," many states may have moved beyond the point where they were at the time of the interview. For example, CBO standards that are reported as being under development may now be final, or plans for how to use standards may have been revised. Consequently, we fully acknowledge that in some cases data included in this report may be out of date by the time the report is completed.

A final limitation of this study is the unintended masking of state variability both in terms of the CBO standards themselves and the process used to develop the CBO standards. Each state is truly unique in how it has approached CBO standards. In searching for patterns or themes, however, the research team found it necessary to classify states along certain elements. In doing so, we may have unintentionally minimized the uniqueness of a particular state's CBO standards or process.

Despite the caveats discussed above, the data contained in this report provide a rich picture of what is going on in the states relative to CBO standards. We now turn to an analysis of the CBO standards themselves—where states are in the process of developing CBO standards, what the CBO standards are like, and features of the CBO standards documents.

## References


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## SECTION III: THE STATUS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILD-BASED OUTCOME STANDARDS ACROSS THE NATION

As a starting point for this inquiry, it is necessary to be clear about the status and nature of the CBO standards themselves. Discussion in this chapter, therefore, begins with a look at the states that have developed standards, focusing on where the states are in their process. This discussion is followed by an examination of the characteristics of CBO standards—the ages covered, developmental domains addressed, and other features of the standards themselves. Finally, we examine characteristics of the CBO standards documents (e.g., completion dates, titles, and nomenclature used).

### *The Status of CBO Standards Within States*

Data indicate that there is wide variation in the status of CBO standards within states. Some states have completed a CBO standards development process, while others have not begun to study the issue. Within states that have CBO standards, some are revising their current standards while others already have or are developing a second set of CBO standards for their state. This section outlines where each state was in the CBO standards development process at the time of data collection.

### *States With CBO Standards*

It is clear that CBO standards are increasingly common across the nation. Data from the survey revealed that over half the states have developed some type of document to describe their expectations for children's learning prior to kindergarten entry. Survey data revealed that 27 states had standards addressing at least one developmental domain or content area for some age range prior to kindergarten entry. Two of the 27 states—Maine and Washington—have two separate sets of CBO standards that were applicable for children before they enter kindergarten. Therefore, the total number of CBO standards documents available for review in this study was 29. As noted in Section II, development of these standards for many states is a "moving target," and the data here reflect where the state was in the process at the time of the survey interview. In many cases, states may have had additional developments since the time of the survey and might, indeed, be misclassified as to their current status. Please be aware that these categories reflect data from interviews conducted between November 2001 and May 2002.

In order to present findings about the CBO standards, the research team developed a typology for classifying the status of CBO standards within states. Using data from the surveys and the standards themselves, the research team identified criteria to reflect important milestones in the process of developing CBO standards. While this typology is useful for describing the status of CBO standards within states, it should not be interpreted to imply that the research team views the development of standards as unfolding in a linear, four-step process. Rather, the typology should be viewed as a means to frame the discussion of the status of CBO standards within states. The following four categories constitute the classification schema used to describe the status of CBO standards in each state:

**Operational Definitions for the Status of CBO Standards Within States**

1. **Have standards that have been officially adopted or endorsed:** At the time of the interview, the state's CBO standards had been finalized and adopted or endorsed formally by a governing body or governmental agency. For purposes of this study, the most common governing bodies to adopt or endorse a CBO standards document were state boards of

education. Typically, the adoption/endorsement was noted within the document itself.

II. **Have standards that have not been officially adopted or endorsed:** The state had standards but the respondent(s) indicated that the document had not, at the time of the interview, been officially adopted or endorsed by a governing body or governmental agency.

III. **Have standards in process:** Respondents indicated that a CBO standards document was not published and available for review but that the state had an initiative in place to develop CBO standards. An official work group had been formed to study the issue and develop recommendations and/or CBO standards.

IV. **Do not have CBO standards and are not (at the time of the interview) in the process of developing CBO standards:** Respondents indicated that the state did not have CBO standards and that there was not an official work group formed to study the issue or develop recommended CBO standards.

After examining both the responses on the survey and data from the CBO standards themselves, the research team used a consensus process to determine each state's classification. Table III-1 shows how each state was classified on the typology.

Table III-1

*Status of CBO Standards in States*

| Category I<br>Have standards that have been officially adopted or endorsed | Category II<br>Have standards that have not been officially adopted or endorsed | Category III<br>Standards in process | Category IV<br>No CBO standards |
|---|---|---|---|
| Arkansas | California | Arizona | Alabama |
| Connecticut | Colorado* | Delaware | Alaska |
| Florida | Louisiana | Hawaii | Idaho |
| Georgia*** | Missouri* | Indiana | Iowa |
| Illinois | Ohio** | Kentucky | Kansas |
| Maine*, *** | Oklahoma | Nevada | Montana |
| Maryland | Pennsylvania | North Carolina | Nebraska |
| Massachusetts*** | Rhode Island | Oregon | New Hampshire |
| Michigan | | Tennessee | North Dakota |
| Minnesota | | Virginia | South Dakota |
| Mississippi | | Washington, DC | West Virginia |
| New Jersey** | | Wisconsin | |
| New Mexico | | Wyoming | |
| New York | | | |
| South Carolina*, *** | | | |
| Texas | | | |
| Utah** | | | |
| Vermont*** | | | |
| Washington*** | | | |

* Standards developed to address limited number of developmental/subject areas and standards addressing additional developmental/subject areas in process

** Current standards under revision

*** Two sets of standards in place and/or being developed

As shown in Table III-1, 19 states have standards that have been officially adopted or endorsed by government boards or agencies (Category I). An additional eight states reported that they have standards for at least one developmental domain but that the standards had not been officially adopted or endorsed at the time of the survey interview (Category II). Although not officially adopted, these states had a CBO standards document that had been published and was available for review as part of this study.

In addition to the states that have CBO standards in place, another 12 states and the District of Columbia reported efforts to develop standards for children's learning prior to kindergarten entry (Category III). Although there was wide variation regarding where each was in the process of developing CBO standards (see Section VI for details), in each state an official work group had been formed to develop CBO standards. Some states had just begun to study the issue, and others were moving toward or had draft CBO standards. States with draft CBO standards documents were classified as "in process" if they had a document that they considered incomplete and unavailable for review.

Finally, a total of 11 states did not have CBO standards and did not have a process underway to develop them (Category IV). As described in Section VI, these states had a variety of early childhood initiatives underway. They also reported a variety of reasons for not having or developing CBO standards.

Clearly, CBO standards are common among states. At the point in time when the "in-process" states finish their work, a total of 39 states plus the District of Columbia will have CBO standards to define what they think is important for children to know and be able to do prior to entering kindergarten.

### *CBO Standards: A Moving Target*

A closer look at states within the four categories reveals that the CBO standards development process is, indeed, a moving target. The four categories used in Table III-1, while accurate, oversimplify the diversity of ways the process and the content of the standards are evolving.

#### *States With Standards in Some, But Not All, Domains*

Four states (see states with * in Table III-1) reported that they have CBO standards for one or more areas of development and are in the process of developing additional standards to address additional developmental/subject areas. For example, South Carolina reported that CBO standards for mathematics had been completed and adopted by the State Board of Education and that the state was in the process of developing language arts, science, fine arts, and social studies CBO standards. Likewise, Colorado had CBO standards addressing reading, writing, and math, with standards addressing social/emotional competence, science, and art in the development process. Maine (Early Learning Results) and Missouri also had standards in place to address certain domains or content areas and were in the process of developing additional standards. While some states chose to develop standards across all domains at once, these states chose to address domains consecutively and, at the time of the interviews, were still in the process of completing standards for all the domains for which they expected to have standards. We have counted them as having standards, since one or more domains were finalized, even though they are still in the standards development process.

#### *States Revising Standards*

As noted in Table III-1, several states that have standards in place were in the process of revising them (states with ** in Table III-1). Three states with CBO standards in place fall into this category—New Jersey, Ohio, and Utah. Utah reported "guidelines" that are recommended benchmarks for three- to five-year-olds. The respondent indicated a process was underway to develop standards that will be broader than the current CBO standards and provide expectations for skills and abilities that children should develop. Ohio was in the process of developing academic content standards for preschool children to replace the current competency-based CBO standards that are applied to children ages three through grade twelve. New Jersey's current CBO standards were also being revised.

#### *States With More Than One Set of CBO Standards*

Six states—Georgia, Maine, Massachusetts, South Carolina, Vermont, and Washington—either had two sets of CBO standards or had one set of CBO standards and an initiative to develop a second set of CBO standards (see states with *** in Table III-1). These states vary in the reasons for having/developing two sets of standards and also vary in the degree of potential overlap between the standards.

*States with multiple CBO standards that overlap in the age range targeted.* Four states had/were developing standards that overlap in the age range for which they were developed. Maine, Massachusetts, Vermont, and Washington all had CBO standards that

overlap, although Washington's situation is somewhat different from the other three states.

Maine, Massachusetts, and Vermont each had one set of standards that included standards for pre-kindergarten-age children with their K–12 standards. In these three states, respondents reported that efforts were underway to develop a second set of standards to better articulate CBO standards for children younger than kindergarten age. In Maine the K–12 standards are called Learning Results, and they include CBO standards for pre-kindergarten through second grade. Maine's Early Learning Results are being developed to provide CBO standards specifically for children ages birth through five who are receiving special education services. At the time of the interview, several sections of the Early Learning Results had been completed and work was proceeding on the domains that had not been covered. Therefore, both of these sets of standards have been included in this study for purposes of analysis.

Respondents from Vermont and Massachusetts also reported that there was a group in each of their states working on CBO standards specifically for preschool-age children, although the documents were not available for review at the time of the interview. In both of these cases, pre-K standards exist but are part of a continuum of pre-K through K–12 standards. For example, Vermont's Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities defines behaviors, skills, and knowledge expected of young children but is not broken down into specific age ranges. These standards cover pre-K through grade four with one group of standards. An Early Childhood Work Group had been formed to develop standards that would more specifically address expectations for children prior to kindergarten entry. Massachusetts has standards that cover pre-K through second grade. It is developing Early Childhood Program Standards that include CBO standards for three- and four-year-olds specifically.

It appears that in these three states (Maine, Massachusetts, and Vermont), pre-K standards were added on to standards for kindergarten and later grades, with limited specificity regarding the pre-K year. Given the increasing numbers of preschool-age children served within school buildings, it is logical that states might want standards for preschool-age children and that the standards might be incorporated into standards for later grades. However, the early childhood community within these states seems to have begun marshalling resources to develop CBO standards more in line with the unique developmental status of young children and perhaps more specific to this age. It seems that the standards covering pre-K to second grade (or in one case, fourth grade) did not provide the specificity needed to adequately outline expectations or guide curriculum decisions for preschool-age children. Perhaps as a recognition of the increasing importance of such CBO standards, these states have now embarked on a process to develop CBO standards that apply specifically to preschool-age children.

Washington has two sets of standards, one developed by the Children's Services Unit Office of Community Development as part of the evaluation for the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) and the other developed by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). ECEAP primarily serves children who are four years old from high-poverty backgrounds. The CBO standards that have been developed are outcomes that are being measured as part of the program evaluation. The second set of Washington standards, developed by the OSPI, address reading, writing, and communication domains for children ages birth through five years. This second set of CBO standards was developed as a resource to help adults working with children prior to kindergarten entry know how best to promote children's language and literacy development. For purposes of this study, both sets of CBO standards have been included

Insert after page 17.

**Figure III-1**

**Geographic Distribution of CBO Standards**

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in the analysis. In the charts and discussions, we have noted which of the sets of standards was being addressed.

In each of these states that have (or are developing) two sets of standards, there is some overlap in the ages of children addressed by the standards. Although further analysis will be necessary to examine the content of the standards for similarities and dissimilarities, there does appear to be potential for confusion within the field. This raises some critical questions. In school-based pre-kindergarten programs, will the CBO standards being developed specifically for pre-kindergarten children replace the pre-kindergarten CBOs that are part of the K–12 standards? Are expectations for four-year-olds in one set of CBO standards different from those in the other? Would programs using one set of CBO standards (such as the ECEAP CBO standards in Washington) find continuity or discontinuity between the CBO standards if they wanted to use the second set (the OSPI standards) as a resource?

*States developing a second set of CBO standards to address infants and toddlers.* Two states—South Carolina and Georgia—reported that they were in the process of developing a second set of CBO standards to cover infants and toddlers. In both cases, at the time of the interviews, CBO standards existed for programs serving pre-kindergarten-age children, and separate programs that served infants and toddlers were in the process of developing CBO standards. South Carolina had standards to define what children in the school-based pre-kindergarten program should learn and was in the final phases of developing standards for children under the age of three who were part of the state's family literacy and parent education program. At the time of the interview, while Georgia had CBO standards for its pre-kindergarten program—developed by the Office of School Readiness—the Georgia Early Learning Initiative (GELI), which serves children under the age of three, was in the process of developing CBO standards.

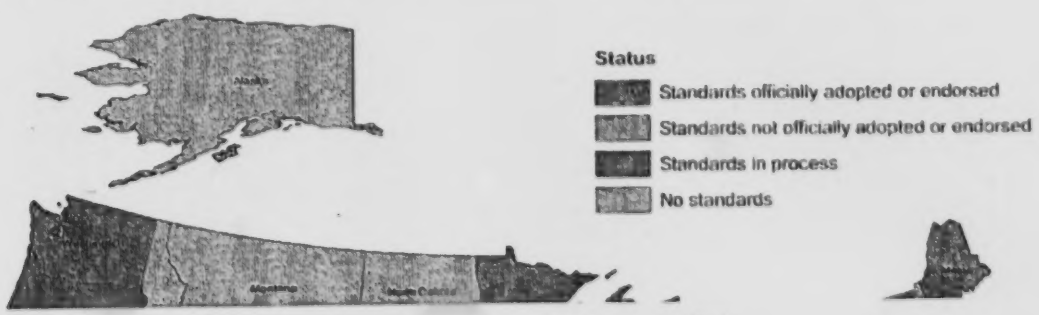
Again, this phenomenon of multiple sets of standards would seem to support the notion that states recognize the importance of having CBO standards that are specifically geared to the age or characteristics of children the particular program is serving. In each of these cases, CBO standards are being developed by a program for its particular population. Although similar to the phenomena described earlier, where states are revising current standards or developing a second set, in these cases, multiple early childhood programs, each serving a different age population, are developing their own standards.

*Regional Patterns*

As seen in Figure III-1, it is clear that most of the states within the country have (or will have) CBO standards for children prior to kindergarten entry. It does appear that CBO standards may be more common for states in the east, south, and southwest. States without CBO standards appear to be concentrated within the nation's upper-middle section.

Figure III-1

Geographic Distribution of CBO Standards



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### *Characteristics of the CBO Standards*

Having looked at which states have standards, we now examine characteristics of the standards themselves, looking first at the age ranges targeted by the standards, followed by other properties of the standards, such as the developmental domains covered, the linkage of the standards to the state's K–12 standards, the developmental orientation of the CBO standards, and how children with disabilities were included in the CBO standards.

### *Ages Addressed in CBO Standards Documents*

The research team was interested in what ages of children states have targeted with their CBO standards. Have states targeted children just entering kindergarten? In the preschool years? Infants and toddlers? We found that the majority of CBO standards developed by states have been designed to address a fairly broad age range rather than one specific age or point in time, such as entry to kindergarten (see Table III-2). Respondents from 17 states indicated that their states' standards are for children between the ages of three and five. Standards in six additional states (Maryland, Missouri, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Washington—ECEAP) are specifically designed to describe expectations for children at the completion of pre-K or the beginning of kindergarten.

Table III-2

*Ages Covered by CBO Standards*

| State | Infant/ Toddler | 3–5 | End of Pre-K/ Kindergarten Entry | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Arkansas | | X | | |
| California | X | X | X | Are part of continuum of birth through 14 years |
| Colorado | | X | | |
| Connecticut | | X | | |
| Florida | | X | X | Pre-K and K, with ages broken down (i.e., 3-year-olds, 4-year-olds, and 5-year-olds) |
| Georgia | | X | | |
| Illinois | | X | | |
| Louisiana | | X | | All 4-year-olds and 3- to 5-year-olds with disabilities |
| Maine<br>Learning Results<br>Early Learning Results | X | X<br>X | X | Pre-K to 2<br>0–5 years for Special Ed. |
| Maryland | | | X | Part of pre-K to K Content Standards |
| Massachusetts | | X | X | Part of pre-K to twelfth grade (pre-K to 2 for most subject areas; pre-K to 4 for history and social science) |
| Michigan | | X | X | Pre-K to second grade |

| State | Infant/ Toddler | 3–5 | End of Pre-K/ Kindergarten Entry | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Minnesota | | X | | Approximately 4 years old |
| Mississippi | | X | | 4-year-olds |
| Missouri | | | X | |
| New Jersey | | X | | |
| New Mexico | X | X | | Part of Focused Portfolios assessment system that covers birth through 5 years |
| New York | | X | | 4-year-olds |
| Ohio | | X | | |
| Oklahoma | | | X | |
| Pennsylvania | | X | X | Pre-K to second grade but "through pre-K" and pre-K to K" are broken out |
| Rhode Island | | | X | |
| S. Carolina | | X | | Pre-K to second grade but have the pre-K separated out |
| Texas | | X | | |
| Utah | | X | | |
| Vermont | | X | X | Pre-K to fourth grade |
| Washington<br>ECEAP<br>OSPI | <br><br>X | <br><br>X | X | Continuum of birth through 5 years (OSPI) |
| Total | 4 | 24 | 12 | |

While the research team was interested in CBO standards that have been developed for children prior to kindergarten entry, an interesting finding was that a number of states' CBO standards for preschool-age children extend upward into later grades. For Florida and Maryland, pre-K and kindergarten standards are together. In Florida, standards are articulated by age level (three-year-olds, four-year-olds, and five-year-olds). The Maryland document presents pre-K standards separately from kindergarten standards. Five states (Maine—Learning Results, Massachusetts, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina) have standards that cover pre-K through second grade. In Pennsylvania and South Carolina, there are specific standards for pre-K that are presented separately from standards for the other grades. In Maine, Massachusetts, and Michigan, the standards are labeled pre-K through second grade, without any distinction between the age/grade levels. Finally, Vermont's CBO standards cover the widest age range—from pre-K through grade four—and do not break out specific standards for pre-K.

As discussed above, states with broad standards incorporating pre-K into K–12 standards seem to be moving toward developing more specific standards for preschool-age children. Three states where pre-K CBO standards are blended with K–12 standards—Maine (Learning Results), Massachusetts, and Vermont—have initiatives to develop standards specifically for children younger than kindergarten entry. Michigan's CBO standards document presents descriptive information about child development for children in the age ranges of three–five, five–seven, and seven–nine. However, the document presents indicators for specific learner outcomes in pre-K through second grade. According to our survey data, there has been discussion in Michigan about

developing CBO standards that would address four-year-old children specifically rather than indicators for pre-K through second grade.

Standards for infants and toddlers are much less common. Four states (California, Maine, New Mexico, and Washington—OSPI) reported CBO standards that include children ages birth through 36 months. Maine—Early Learning Results, New Mexico, and Washington—OSPI have standards for infants and toddlers that have been developed as part of a continuum of standards covering birth through five years. Maine has developed Birth to Five Early Learning Results to cover special education for children ages birth through five years. Washington's OSPI program has standards that address children ages birth through five, and New Mexico's Focused Portfolio system includes ages birth through five. California's Desired Results have been developed for state-funded programs serving children from birth through age 14.

Three additional states reported that they were in the process of developing standards for children under age three. South Carolina and Georgia reported that they were in the process of developing standards for infants and toddlers (described above), and an Illinois respondent noted plans to develop CBO standards for children under age three.

*Developmental Domains Covered in the CBO Standards*

One of the first areas of interest for the research team was the degree to which the National Education Goals Panel's five dimensions of readiness were covered in CBO standards. Respondents were asked to indicate which of the dimensions were included in their standards. In addition, we examined the actual documents to determine which developmental domains were addressed, using the National Educational Goals Panel's developmental domain descriptions as indicators for what is included in each domain (see Appendix C for a description of each of the five developmental domains). For purposes of this analysis, the domain could be a separate sub-category within the CBO standards or could be covered through items included under a subject area with a title that was different from the domain. For instance, approaches to learning might be covered under standards developed for science.

As shown in Table III-3, all states except South Carolina and Missouri have developed standards that include more than one domain (and both Missouri and South Carolina have CBO standards in process to address at least one additional domain). Seven of the states have standards that address all five developmental domains. Eleven states report that their standards cover four of the domains, and seven states report that their standards cover two or three of the domains.

Table III-3

*National Education Goals Panel Developmental Domains Included in CBO Standards*

| State | Physical Health | Cognition | Approaches to Learning | Social/ Emotional | Language |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Arkansas | X | X | X | X | X |
| California | X | X | X | X | X |
| Colorado | | X | | | X |
| Connecticut | X | X | | X | X |
| Florida | X | X | X | X | X |
| Georgia | X | X | | X | X |
| Illinois | X | X | | X | X |
| Louisiana | X | X | | X | X |

| State | Physical Health | Cognition | Approaches to Learning | Social/ Emotional | Language |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Maine<br>Learning Results<br>Early Learning Results | X<br>X | X<br>IP | | X | X<br>X |
| Maryland | | X | | | X |
| Massachusetts | | X | | | X |
| Michigan | X | X | | X | X |
| Minnesota | X | X | X | X | X |
| Mississippi | X | X | | X | X |
| Missouri | IP | IP | IP | IP | X |
| New Jersey | X | X | | X | X |
| New Mexico | X | X | | X | X |
| New York | | X | | | X |
| Ohio | | X | | | X |
| Oklahoma | X | X | X | X | X |
| Pennsylvania | | X | | | X |
| Rhode Island | X | X | X | X | X |
| South Carolina | | X | | | IP |
| Texas | X | X | | X | X |
| Utah | X | X | | X | X |
| Vermont | X | X | X | X | X |
| Washington<br>ECEAP<br>OSPI | X | X<br>X | | X | X<br>X |
| Totals | 20 | 27 | 7 | 19 | 28 |

Note: IP = In process (at the time of the interview, the state was actively working on CBO standards addressing this domain)

Language is the most common domain to be included in these CBO standards. All of the states except South Carolina (and it has language CBO standards in process) addressed this domain. Cognition was also very commonly included in the CBO standards. Only Missouri and Maine (Early Learning Results) had not developed CBO standards for cognition at the time this study's data were collected (and, again, these states had standards addressing these domains in process). Physical health was the next most commonly addressed domain, with 20 of the 29 CBO standards documents including this domain.

The data seem to indicate that the approaches to learning domain is the domain least likely to be addressed in the CBO standards. Of the 29 sets of CBO standards, only 7 include approaches to learning. The social/emotional domain is the next least likely domain to be addressed, with 10 sets of standards (Colorado, Maine—Learning Results, Maryland, Massachusetts, Missouri, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Washington—OSIP) not covering social/emotional development.

### *Subject Area Analysis*

Examination of the standards by content area provides a more detailed look at what subject areas are addressed by the CBO standards documents. For purposes of this analysis, subject area titles used within the CBO standards document itself were used to decide whether a particular subject area was addressed by the CBO standards document. However, in determining whether approaches to learning, self-help, and social-emotional development were addressed, the research team examined individual items to determine if they were related to those particular subjects. In these cases, the description provided

by the National Educational Goals Panel (see Appendix C) served as an operational definition for the area. As shown in Table III-4, states have addressed a number of different subject areas in their standards. Although no state has developed standards to address all of these subject areas, the median number of subject areas addressed within the CBO standards documents was 8, with a range from 1 subject area (South Carolina) to 11. Arkansas, Maine—Learning Results, Michigan, Texas, and Vermont topped the list with standards to address 11 subject areas.

Table III-4

*Subject Areas Addressed in CBO Standards*

| State | Language/ Communication | Literature | Math | Physical/ Motor/ Health | Social/ Emotional | Science | Cognition/ General Knowledge | Art/ Aesthetic/ Creative | Approach | Social Studies | Self-Help | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Arkansas | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | Nutrition |
| California | X | X | X | X | X | | | | X | | | |
| Colorado | X | X | X | | | IP | | | | | | |
| Connecticut | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | | X | |
| Florida | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | |
| Georgia | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X | | | X | |
| Illinois | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X | | X | | Foreign language |
| Louisiana | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X | | |
| Maine Learning Results<br>Early Learning Results | X<br>X | X<br>X | X | X<br>X | <br>X | X<br>IP | X<br>IP | X | | X | | LR: Career Preparation Modern & Classical Languages Technology |
| Maryland | X | X | X | | | X | | | | X | | |
| Massachusetts | X | X | X | | | X | X | | | X | | Technology Engineering |
| Michigan | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X | X | Nutrition |
| Minnesota | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | |
| Mississippi | X | X | X | X | X | X | | | | | | |
| Missouri | X | X | IP | IP | IP | IP | | | IP | | | |
| New Jersey | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X | | World languages |
| New Mexico | X | X | | X | X | | | X | | | | |
| New York | X | X | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ohio | X | X | X | | | X | | X | | X | | Foreign language |

| State | Language/ Communication | Literature | Math | Physical/ Motor/ Health | Social/ Emotional | Science | Cognition/ General Knowledge | Art/ Aesthetic/ Creative | Approach | Social Studies | Self-Help | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Oklahoma | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X | X | X | | |
| Pennsylvania | X | X | X | | | | | | | | | |
| Rhode Island | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X | X | | | |
| South Carolina | IP | IP | X | IP | | | | IP | | | | |
| Texas | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X | X | Technology applications |
| Utah | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | | | |
| Vermont | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X | X | X | | Technology Civic/social responsibility |
| Washington<br>ECAP<br>OSPI | X<br>X | X<br>X | X<br>IP | X* | X | IP | | | | | X | |
| Total States Addressing this Area | 28 | 28 | 24 | 20 | 19 | 19 | 11 | 17 | 7 | 14 | 5 | |

Note: IP = In Process

* Indicators are for health screenings and services children should receive.

As noted, language and literacy are the most common subject areas to be addressed. CBO standards in all states except South Carolina covered these subject areas, and in South Carolina CBO standards to address language and literacy were in process. Given the current emphasis at the federal level on early literacy skills and research that suggests that literacy is a key element of later school success, the frequency with which states have addressed language and literacy is understandable. It is interesting to note, however, that the CBO standards did vary in how they approached these subject areas. Some states broke them into two separate domains, while others included literacy under the language domain. Some states had separate domain sections for several elements of language and/or literacy, while other states included just a few items about one or the other domains. Though the exact approach for including these domains varied, it is clear that states have found it important to address children's language and literacy development in CBO standards.

This analysis shows that there has been a marked increase in the number of CBO standards addressing language and literacy. In a recent national study of state-level standards for children's literacy development, Neuman, Celano, Greco, & Shue (2001) found that 15 states had mandated standards for literacy and 16 states had unmandated guidelines for early care and education programs related to literacy. Of the 31 states with standards (mandated or unmandated), only 14 states reported some form of CBO standards for emergent literacy. In contrast, our data (collected less than a year later) indicate that 28 out of the 29 sets of CBO standards addressed language and literacy development. Neuman et al. report that an additional 11 states had standards for children's literacy development that focused solely on program or curriculum requirements/guidelines, without addressing standards for child outcomes. Finally, three states had adopted the Head Start program's performance standards, which are federal standards that address both child outcomes and program requirements for literacy development. It seems that as states have moved toward developing CBO standards, the language and literacy domain has been considered one of the most important domains to address. While states may have first developed program standards for this subject area, there has been a marked increase in the number addressing child outcomes through CBO standards.

Mathematics is the second most common subject area to be included within CBO standards. All but five sets of CBO standards (Maine—Early Learning Results, Missouri, New Mexico, New York, and Washington—OSPI) have standards for children's mathematics development. Nineteen of the CBO standards address children's physical development, motor development, and/or general health status. On the other end of the spectrum, only five sets of CBO standards (Connecticut, Georgia, Michigan, Texas, and Washington—OSPI) address self-help skills. In each of these cases, there is not a section titled "self-help skills." Rather, the state developed one or more items addressing self-help skills and incorporated them into a related domain.

Although approaches to learning and social/emotional development are not traditionally considered subject areas in K–12 standards, they are addressed in CBO standards. As noted, 19 states included CBO standards addressing children's social/emotional development and 7 addressed approaches to learning. In trying to assess whether approaches to learning were addressed in a particular set of standards, we looked for sections of standards titled approaches to learning (or something similar) and also looked within different subsections (such as mathematics or science) for individual items consistent with the NEGP definition of approaches to learning. Clearly, a limited number of states have addressed this dimension of readiness. Perhaps this is a reflection of the nature of the domain. Characteristics such as curiosity may be harder to describe within a CBO standard. An alternative explanation for this finding is that the approaches to learning domain is less likely to be included in K–12 standards, so states that linked their preschool CBO standards closely to K–12 standards may have had difficulty justifying CBO standards that addressed this domain. While states more frequently addressed the social/emotional development, the dimension was not addressed in 10 sets of standards. It is possible that this dimension also does not lend itself to CBO standards or that it has not been included because it is less likely to be addressed in K–12 standards.



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Data indicate that eventually state CBO standards will address additional subject areas. Several of the states with CBO standards covering a limited number of subject areas are working to extend their CBO standards to other content areas. Missouri and Washington's OSPI program currently only have standards to address language and literacy, but these states are developing standards for a number of additional subject areas. South Carolina's pre-K program standards currently address only math, but standards are in process to address language arts, science, social studies, and the arts.

In summary, it appears that most of the states that have developed CBO standards have taken a relatively holistic view of the child and addressed a good number of developmental domains and subject areas. This is, however, simply a tally of what areas were addressed and gives no information as to the content of the standards. Further analysis will be necessary to determine just how these subject areas have been addressed within the CBO standards.

### *Linkage to K–12 Standards*

As discussed above, the research team hypothesized that the degree to which CBO standards were linked to K–12 standards might impact the nature of the CBO standards. Therefore, survey respondents were asked to comment on the linkage between their states' CBO standards and K–12 standards. Overall, respondents indicated that the CBO standards are strongly linked to standards for kindergarten and later grades. When asked, "To what extent are the early learning standards linked to or modeled after standards developed for your state's K–12 system?" respondents from each of the 27 states indicated that the CBO standards for children from birth through age five were in some way related to the K–12 standards. According to respondents, the way in which and the extent to which their CBO standards were linked varied, ranging from actually being incorporated into the K–12 standards to using a similar format or including similar subject areas. However, every respondent indicated that his or her state's CBO standards were based on, consistent with, or in some way linked to the state's K–12 education standards.

In order to analyze the degree to which the CBO standards in each state were linked to the state's K–12 standards, the interview data and the actual CBO standards documents were examined. A three-point scale was developed to rate the CBO standards according to the degree of linkage to K–12 standards, with evidence of linkage found within the standards document being the most important factor in how a set of CBO standards was classified.

The degree of K–12 linkage for each set of CBO standards was categorized according to the following criteria:

**Operationalization of K–12 Linkage**

**Direct Linkage:** The CBO standards are directly linked to K–12 standards within the same document, either by being incorporated into the K–12 standards or incorporating the K–12 standards into the preschool CBO standards. States typically approached this in one of two ways, by including the actual K–12 standards in the CBO standards document or by providing reference numbers for K–12 standards to show how individual CBO standards related to specific K–12 standards. States using either approach (including the actual standards or providing reference numbers for K–12 standards) have been rated as directly linked.

**Moderate Linkage:** The development process for the CBO standards gave significant consideration to the K–12 standards, with efforts to develop CBO standards items that were directly related to items or areas of the K–12 standards.

**Minimal Linkage:** The respondent reported that efforts were made to develop CBO standards that are consistent with, or specify skills that were generally related to (or precursors of), skills included in the K–12 standards. Examples include using a similar format for the CBO standards or similar developmental domains or content areas.

Table III-5 shows that 15 of the 29 CBO standards were rated as "directly linked" using the criteria above. Illinois, Maine—Learning Results, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Vermont have K–12 standards that extend downward to include pre-kindergarten. In these states, the age range typically addressed in the K–12 standards is pre-K to second grade. However, Maryland's CBO standards combine only pre-K and kindergarten within the same document. Colorado, Florida, Louisiana, and New Jersey have CBO standards documents that are separate from the K–12 standards but include K–12 standards in their CBO standards. Typically the kindergarten standards are included in the CBO standards. Colorado includes the actual language from the K–12 standards in its standards for preschool. Florida, Louisiana, and New Jersey include reference numbers for the K–12 standards (rather than the actual kindergarten standards) and other early childhood standards, such as the Head Start Outcomes Framework.

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Table III-5

*Degree of Linkage to K–12 Standards*

| State | Direct Linkage | Moderate Linkage | Minimal Linkage |
|---|---|---|---|
| Arkansas | | X | |
| California | | X | |
| Colorado | X | | |
| Connecticut | | | X |
| Florida | X* | | |
| Georgia | | X | |
| Illinois | X | | |
| Louisiana | X* | | |
| Maine<br>Learning Results<br>Early Learning Results | X | | X |
| Maryland | X | | |
| Massachusetts | X | | |
| Michigan | X | | |
| Minnesota | | | X |
| Mississippi | | X | |
| Missouri | | X | |
| New Jersey | X* | | |
| New Mexico | | | X |
| New York | X | | |
| Ohio | X | | |
| Oklahoma | | | X |
| Pennsylvania | X | | |
| Rhode Island | | X | |
| South Carolina | X | | |
| Texas | | X | |
| Utah | | | X |
| Vermont | X | | |
| Washington<br>ECEAP<br>OSPI | X | | X |
| Total | 15 | 7 | 7 |

*Includes reference number for K–12 standards rather than actual standards themselves

The middle group of CBO standards—those classified as moderately linked in Table III-5—exhibited some degree of linkage to K–12 standards within the document, but the connection between particular CBO standards and specific K–12 standards was not explicit. Rather, the respondents described how the state's CBO standards used the same broad categories of development as the K–12 standards or how the developers of the CBO standards carefully analyzed the K–12 standards and worked to make the CBO standards consistent with the K–12 standards. In short, the process for developing the CBO standards, more than the actual CBO standards themselves, was linked to the K–12 standards.

The CBO standards in the third category—those rated as minimally linked—demonstrated less evidence within the actual documents of how the CBO standards related to the K–12 standards.

Given that the documents did not provide evidence of a linkage between K–12 education standards and CBO standards, the research team turned to data from the surveys. Survey respondents in these states typically did not describe how particular elements of the K–12 standards were included or taken into account when the CBO standards were developed (criteria used to define "moderately linked states"). However, even in these states survey respondents were unanimous in pointing out that their CBO standards were related to the K–12 standards. It seems that these states wanted to make the point that skills and characteristics that children develop prior to entering kindergarten make a contribution to their success later in school but that the CBO standards for preschool-age children should have a separate identity (or perhaps be qualitatively different) from K–12 standards.

A respondent from Minnesota notes,

> The Early Childhood Indicators [of Progress] are not modeled on K–12 standards because the K–12 standards are more akin to "expectations." Rather, the Early Childhood Indicators are ways to help ensure that children make progress in domain areas that will later support the learning standards expected in K–12. The Early Childhood Indicators are designed to help young children eventually reach these later benchmarks.

The fact that all respondents indicated that their states' CBO standards were related to the K–12 standards indicates that linkage to the K–12 standards is important. However, the ways the linkages are conceptualized differ. The sets of standards rated as "minimally linked" may be seen as setting early childhood apart from expectations for older children while, at the same time, trying to show the connection between what children learn and how they develop before kindergarten and how they progress in school. CBO standards rated as "directly linked" made the connection to K–12 standards more explicit, showing the correspondence between specific CBO standards and specific K–12 standards. In all states, the CBO standards are seen as paving the way for what children need to know and be able to do in order to be successful in meeting the K–12 standards. However, states have varied in how they have approached this linkage to K–12 standards and whether they see their CBO standards as a downward extension of the K–12 standards or as unique from (but contributing to children's success on) the K–12 standards.

In order to determine the extent to which linkage to K–12 standards might be related to characteristics of CBO standards, the research team conducted a series of analyses. One analysis examined the relationship between K–12 linkage and the number of subject areas addressed within the CBO standards. It did seem that CBO standards more directly linked to K–12 standards include a greater number of subject areas. As stated above, the median number of subject areas addressed within CBO standards documents was eight. The range was from one to 11. All of the states that included the greatest number of subject areas in the CBO standards (Maine—Learning Results, Michigan, Texas, and Vermont) except one (Arkansas) had standards that were rated as directly linked to the K–12 standards. Arkansas' CBO standards were rated as moderately linked to K–12 standards. It seems that when early childhood standards are directly tied to (or correspond directly with) K–12 standards, a broader range of subject matter is addressed, including subjects that might be considered non-traditional within early care and education (such as technology and career preparation). The four states that include foreign language as part of their CBO standards—Illinois, Maine, New Jersey, and Ohio—provide examples of this phenomenon. In each of these states, the CBO standards are directly linked to the K–12 standards. Perhaps one effect of closely tying CBO standards to K–12 standards is that the traditional early childhood domains are expanded to include "non-traditional" subject matter.

### *Orientation of the Standards*

In an attempt to better understand the general orientation of the standards, a broad scan was conducted, and standards with particularly heavy emphasis on academic content—as well as

standards with heavy emphasis on developmental processes—were noted. The research team examined the degree to which the CBO standards focused on children's behavior and growth versus the degree to which the standards focused on knowledge or academic content that was expected. Using data from this broad scan, the research team classified the CBO standards as "primarily developmental" or "primarily academic." The ratings were operationally defined as follows:

**Operationalization of CBO Standards' Orientation**

> **Primarily developmental:** The majority of items were deemed to be oriented toward developmental processes, children's growth, and/or children's behaviors. Examples include items that refer to a child's growing ability to express emotions, understand the world around him/her, or coordinate fine and gross motor movements.
>
> **Primarily academic:** The majority of items within the CBO standards emphasized facts or content children are expected to know. Items that indicated expectations that children name body parts, recognize letters, or classify and sort materials according to various criteria, such as length or color, are examples of items classified as academic.

In order to establish a process for rating the child-based outcome standards documents, the research team examined a set of sample items and came to agreement on how the set would be rated—primarily developmental or primarily academic. The general definitions used in these sample ratings were then used to operationalize subsequent ratings of the child-based outcome standards. Two members of the research team then rated each set of standards independently and classified the standards document as either primarily developmental or primarily academic based on the orientation of the standards items. A child-based outcome standards document was rated as primarily developmental if the majority of the items were developmentally oriented, and the document was rated as primarily academic if the majority of the items were seen as having an academic orientation. The independent raters differed on the ratings for only two CBO standards documents (an interrater agreement rate of 93.1%). In the cases of these two, consensus was achieved on how the documents should be rated, and the agreed-upon rating was used for the purposes of analysis.

This analysis of the CBO standards was designed to provide data about the general orientation of the CBO standards rather than the actual content of the standards. Once again, this is not a detailed analysis of the content of the standards. Rather, this is a categorization of the orientation of the standards documents as a whole. Table III-6 indicates the rating that was given to each CBO standards document.

Table III-6
*Orientation of the CBO Standards*

| State | Primarily Academic | Primarily Developmental |
|---|---|---|
| Arkansas | | X |
| California | | X |
| Colorado | | X |
| Connecticut | | X |
| Florida | | X |
| Georgia | X | |
| Illinois | | X |
| Louisiana | X | |
| Maine Learning Results | X | |

| State | Primarily Academic | Primarily Developmental |
|---|---|---|
| Early Learning Results | | X |
| Maryland | X | |
| Massachusetts | X | |
| Michigan | | X |
| Minnesota | | X |
| Mississippi | | X |
| Missouri | | X |
| New Jersey | | X |
| New Mexico | | X |
| New York | X | |
| Ohio | X | |
| Oklahoma | | X |
| Pennsylvania | X | |
| Rhode Island | | X |
| South Carolina | X | |
| Texas | | X |
| Utah | | X |
| Vermont | X | |
| Washington | | |
| ECEAP | | X |
| OSPI | | X |
| Total | 10 | 19 |

The analysis indicated that almost all of the CBO standards had a mix of developmentally and academically oriented standards. When looking at the primary emphasis overall, however, we noted that the majority of the CBO standards documents developed for children under age five were categorized as primarily developmental. Nineteen of the CBO standards were classified as primarily developmental, while 10 standards documents were classified as primarily academic.

We were interested in whether CBO standards that were more directly linked to K–12 standards were more likely to have an academic orientation. Since K–12 standards typically are more academic in nature, we hypothesized that states whose preschool CBO standards were closely linked to the K–12 standards might have more academically oriented CBO standards. Of the 15 sets of CBO standards categorized as "directly linked" to K–12 standards (i.e., have the K–12 standards within the preschool standards or the preschool standards within the K–12 standards), nine (Louisiana, Maine—Learning Results, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Vermont) were categorized as having primarily academic CBO standards. The remaining six (Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Michigan, New Jersey, and Washington—OSPI) had CBO standards that were directly linked to the K–12 standards but had a primarily developmental orientation. Examining the question from another angle, when you look at the states categorized as primarily academic, all but one (Georgia) fall into the category of "directly linked" to the K–12 standards. Therefore, it does seem that CBO standards that are directly linked to the K–12 standards may be more likely to have an academic orientation, although a number of "directly linked" states did have CBO standards with a developmental orientation.

### *Characteristics of the CBO Standards Documents*

Having examined the nature of the standards, we now turn to characteristics of the CBO standards documents themselves—when were they finalized, what titles are used for important elements of the CBO standards, what subjects are addressed, and what types of supplemental materials are included in the documents.

*Time Frame for CBO Standards Documents*

The process of developing CBO standards can be long and complex, with multiple drafts being developed. It is, therefore, difficult to pinpoint just when a set of standards is "complete." We have attempted to collect data on the time frame within which each of the states completed its CBO standards document. For purposes of the study, we have operationally defined the "completion" date for CBO standards as the date when the document was officially adopted/endorsed or, in cases when this information was not available, when the document was published. For states working on developmental domains sequentially, the "completion" date reflects when the first in their series of documents addressing various developmental domains was complete.

As the data in Table III-7 show, CBO standards are a relatively new phenomenon. A few pioneer states (Michigan, Texas, Vermont, and Washington) had standards covering preschool-age children prior to 1996. The preponderance (18 out of 29 sets of standards) have CBO standards that were finalized in 2000 or later. It is interesting to note that several of the states with pre-K CBO standards incorporated into the K–12 standards (Maine, Michigan, Ohio, and Vermont) were some of the first to be completed (1999 or before), and the very first state to have pre-K standards—Texas—revised its standards in 1999. Likewise, Washington's ECEAP standards first completed in 1988 were revised starting in 1996 and finalized in 1999.

Table III-7

*Time Frame for Completion of CBO Standards*

| State | Completion/ Finalization Date* |
|---|---|
| Arkansas | 1999 |
| California | 2001 |
| Colorado | 2000 |
| Connecticut | 1999 |
| Florida | 2002 |
| Georgia | 1996 |
| Illinois | 2000 |
| Louisiana | 2002 |
| Maine<br>Learning Results<br>Early Learning Results | <br>1997<br>1999 |
| Maryland | 2002 |
| Massachusetts | 2001 |
| Michigan | 1992 |
| Minnesota | 2000 |
| Mississippi | 2001 |
| Missouri | 2001 |
| New Jersey | 2000 |
| New Mexico | 2000 |
| New York | 2002 |
| Ohio | 1999 |
| Oklahoma | 1996 |
| Pennsylvania | 2001 |
| Rhode Island | 2002 |
| South Carolina | 2001 |

| State | Completion/ Finalization Date* |
|---|---|
| Texas | 1985/1999 |
| Utah | 2000 |
| Vermont | 1993 |
| Washington | |
| ECEAP | 1988/1999 |
| OSPI | 2000 |

* The date when the document was officially adopted/endorsed
or, in cases when this information was not available, when the document was published.

These data suggest that within the past five years CBO standards for preschool-age children have become increasingly common. Furthermore, the fact that 12 additional states had standards in process at the time of the interviews suggests that by the close of the year 2003 almost 40 states could have CBO standards in place.

### *Titles Used for CBO Standards Documents*

States have used a variety of titles to identify their early learning standards. As seen in Table III-8, the titles for the documents vary greatly. Titles that include the words "standards," "benchmarks," and/or "frameworks" are relatively common. Nine states have documents that include CBO standards but have titles that imply the standards are for the program (such as "content standards," "curriculum standards," "program standards"), usually because both program and CBO standards are included in the same document. Some states (such as California's Desired Results and Colorado's Building Blocks) have unique titles for their early learning standards. Clearly there is great variation in what states have called their CBO standards documents.

Table III-8

*Titles for CBO Standards Documents*

| State | Title of the Document |
|---|---|
| Arkansas | Arkansas Early Childhood Education Framework: Benchmarks with Strategies/Activities for Three- and Four-Year-Old Children |
| California | Desired Results for Children and Families |
| Colorado | Building Blocks to Colorado's Content Standards |
| Connecticut | The Connecticut Framework: Preschool Curricular Goals and Benchmarks |
| Florida | Florida School Readiness Performance Standards |
| Georgia | Georgia Pre-kindergaren Program Learning Goals |
| Illinois | Illinois Early Learning Standards |
| Louisiana | Louisiana Standards for Programs Serving Four-Year-Olds |
| Maine | Learning Results<br>Birth to Five Early Learning Results |
| Maryland | MSDE Representative Examples Manual: Pre-kindergarten and Kindergarten Content Standards |
| Massachusetts | Massachusetts Curriculum Framework Pre-K–12 |
| Michigan | Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Pre-kindergarten through Second Grade |
| Minnesota | Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of Progress: A Resource Guide |

| State | Title of the Document |
|---|---|
| Mississippi | Mississippi Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum |
| Missouri | Missouri Pre-K Literacy Standards |
| New Jersey | Early Childhood Education Program Expectations: Standards of Quality |
| New Mexico | Preschool Developmental Milestones Chart |
| New York | Early Literacy Guidance Pre-kindergarten–Grade 3 |
| Ohio | Performance Objectives for Ohio's Model Competency Based (subject area)* Education Program Pre-K–3 |
| Oklahoma | Developmental Learning Skills |
| Pennsylvania | Early Childhood Learning Continuum Indicators |
| Rhode Island | Rhode Island Early Learning Standards |
| South Carolina | South Carolina Mathematics Curriculum Standards |
| Texas | Pre-kindergarten Curriculum Standards |
| Utah | Utah Early Childhood Standards (Guidelines) |
| Vermont | Vermont's Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities |
| Washington<br>OSPI<br><br>ECEAP | <br>A Framework for Achieving the Essential Academic Learning Requirements in Reading, Writing, Communication (Birth to 5 Years)<br>Washington State's Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program's Outcomes Selected for New Evaluation Design |

* Ohio has developed a separate document for each of the subject areas addressed in its standards.

When the nomenclature given to the individual CBO standards themselves (rather than the standards document as a whole) is examined, "indicators" and "standards" are the most common titles used. Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Utah, and Vermont refer to the descriptions of skills/knowledge children should develop as "standards." "Indicators" is the term used by California, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, and Pennsylvania. Other terms used for the individual standards include "benchmarks" (Arkansas, Illinois, Mississippi), "milestones" (New Mexico), "learning goals" (Georgia, Rhode Island) or "goals" (Texas), "suggested characteristics" (Washington—OSPI), "outcomes" (Washington—ECEAP), "program goals" (Connecticut), "early competencies" (New York), "expectations" (New Jersey), and "developmental skills" (Oklahoma).

This wide variation in the terms used to label CBO standards is indicative of the limited agreement in the field about nomenclature that should be applied to standards for early learning and development. Another indicator of the limited consensus on terminology is the wide range of operational definitions provided as part of the standards documents. As noted in Table III-9, states have developed a variety of definitions for similar terms. The table includes the operational definitions that were provided as part of the standards documents analyzed for this project.

Table III-9

*Operational Definitions of CBO Standards Terminology*

| Term | State | Definition Included in the CBO Standards Document |
|---|---|---|
| Benchmark | Arkansas | A level of performance that can be supported through observations, descriptions, and documentations of a child's performance or behavior and by samples of a child's work. Some educators may also refer to these as "learner outcomes." |
| Benchmark | Mississippi | What children should know and be able to do. |
| Desired result | California | A condition of well-being for children and families. |
| Essential knowledge | Vermont | What students should *know*; includes the most important and enduring ideas, issues, dilemmas, principles, and concepts from the disciplines. |
| Essential skills | Vermont | What students should be able to do; ways of thinking, working, communicating, and investigating. |
| Examples | Missouri | Observable behaviors that children may exhibit in their literacy development. |
| Expectations | Rhode Island | Examples of typical four-year-old behavior that demonstrate competence in relation to each Learning Goal. |
| Indicator | California | Defines a desired result more specifically so that it can be measured. |
| Indicator | Missouri | Milestones toward the development of competencies. |
| Developmental profile indicator | Louisiana | Specifies what most pre-kindergarten children should be able to do by the end of their preschool experience. |
| Performance indicator | Maine | Describes what students *should know* and *be able to do* from one level to the next to demonstrate attainment of a content standard; defines in more specific terms the stages of achievement, or checkpoints, toward meeting the content standard. |
| Learning goal | Rhode Island | Categories of knowledge and skills within each [developmental] domain. |
| Standards | Vermont | Identifies the essential knowledge and skills that should be taught and learned in school; also identifies behaviors and attitudes related to thinking, working, communicating, and investigating. |
| Content standard | Maine | Broad descriptions of the knowledge and skills that students should acquire. |
| Content practice standard | Louisiana | Describes the broad outcomes that children should achieve in a high-quality preschool experience. |
| Process standard | Missouri | Competencies in the process of literacy development. |

Most of the definitions include some reference to expectations for what children will learn and/or be able to do. Some states use one term (such as "standards") to address a broad expectation for children's development and a second term (such as "indicators") to provide more specific descriptions of skills related to the broad concept. The CBO standards include a variety of titles for the documents and their contents, and how states have operationally defined each of the elements within the CBO standards documents also varies.

Perhaps equally as interesting as the definitions provided in the state documents, is the number of states that did not provide operational definitions. Of the 27 states with CBO standards, only eight provided operational definitions of the terms that were used. Other states used titles for the document and the descriptions of children's development and learning but did not provide operational definitions for the terms used.

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### *K–12 Linkage and Nomenclature*

Given the wide variation in the nomenclature used to describe CBO standards and the general lack of consensus about definitions of terms described above, we were interested in whether there were particular patterns that might be associated with the words that states have used to describe their CBO standards. We conducted a series of analyses to see whether particular titles chosen for the CBO standards documents might be associated with characteristics of the CBO standards themselves. The first of these analyses examined whether the nomenclature used as titles for the documents was associated with the degree to which the CBO standards were linked to the K–12 standards.

In order to determine if the CBO standards rated as having closer linkages with the K–12 standards might be more likely to be called "standards," states that included the word "standards" in the title of their CBO standards documents were compared with states that did not include the word "standards." Documents that contained the word "standards" were more likely to be rated as closely linked to the K–12 standards. Of the 13 documents with the word "standards" in the title, nine were rated as "directly linked" and three were rated as "moderately linked" to K–12 standards. Only one state (Utah) with the word "standards" in the title was considered to have CBO standards that were minimally linked to its K–12 standards. It is interesting to note that the title of the document [Utah Early Childhood Standards (Guidelines)] and the survey respondent clearly communicated that these "standards" are "guidelines" rather than requirements. States that did not use the word "standards" in their title were relatively evenly divided across the categories of linkage to the K–12 standards. Of the 16 sets of CBO standards that did not use the word "standards" in their title, six were minimally linked, four were moderately linked, and six were directly linked to the K–12 standards.

### *Supplemental Materials Included in the CBO Standards Documents*

In an effort to emphasize that CBO standards are not the "responsibility" of children, a number of states included in their standards documents descriptions of the educational experiences that should be provided to help children achieve the standards. For some states, such as Connecticut and Minnesota, these supplemental materials consisted of a general description of what early childhood programs should provide. Minnesota went further to describe what policymakers, parents, and the community can do to facilitate children's acquisition of the skills and knowledge described in the CBO standards. Other states, such as Arkansas, Colorado, Georgia, Maryland, Massachusetts, and Mississippi, provided specific suggestions for instructional strategies that would help children achieve a particular standard. Michigan, New Jersey, and New York included the program standards with their CBO standards. Finally, Missouri developed two separate manuals to accompany its early literacy standards—one for parents and one for early care and education providers—to describe practices that support children's early literacy development. A significant number of states took great care to provide adults with the information they need to promote children's development of the skills and abilities outlined in their CBO standards.

### *Inclusion of Modifications for Children With Special Circumstances*

When asked how children from a wide range of developmental levels (such as children with disabilities or children learning English as their second language) are included in the CBO standards, respondents from all 27 states reported that their CBO standards applied to *all* children, including preschool children with disabilities, English language learners, and children from other special circumstances. For example, a respondent from Illinois reported:

> One of the key players from a school district is involved with special needs children so we wanted to make sure that the standards are appropriate for this group of children.

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A respondent from California echoed the state's intent that the CBO standards be used with all children:

> Special education is using our state's standards (with accommodations) as per federal mandate.

Respondents appeared to be keenly aware of requirements for inclusion of children with disabilities, reporting not only the need to make their states' CBO standards available to all children but also the need to provide a continuum of services with appropriate adaptations and modifications. A respondent from New Mexico reported that the state's standards are:

> Easily incorporated into individual family plans (IFPs) and family support plans and are being used in all of the systems because they are based on commonly accepted developmental milestones.

Similarly, a respondent from New Jersey reported, "Educators will need to personalize learning for each child and honor the differences in all children." And finally, a respondent from Colorado reported:

> We do not have special documents for special education. The state has a very specific and definite philosophical framework of what it means by *all children*.

States have worked to provide guidance on how to use CBO standards with children with disabilities. In California, an initiative has been funded to look specifically at how the Desired Results system can accommodate children with disabilities. Maine's Early Learning Results are designed for use in programs serving children with disabilities. However, when the CBO documents were examined, relatively few addressed specific strategies on how children with disabilities should be included when the CBO standards are implemented at the classroom level. Louisiana's CBO standards document is an example of a document that provides general suggestions for how to accommodate children with disabilities. The Louisiana document provides the following guidance for accommodations: "Simplify a complicated task by breaking it into smaller parts or reducing the number of steps." There are not, however, specific suggestions for how this should be done for specific standards items. In general, teachers and others implementing the CBO standards will find relatively little guidance on how the standards apply for children with disabilities.

Perhaps more telling was the lack of guidance related to children from families whose primary language is not English. The CBO standards developed by the Texas Education Agency specifies that "for students whose first language is other than English, the native language serves as the foundation for English language acquisition. Specific guidelines for the language and literacy development of pre-kindergarten children whose home language is not English in English-only settings appear . . . in each domain [of the Language and Early Literacy Development section]." Most other state CBO standards documents were silent as to how to apply the standards with English language learners. Some respondents spoke of plans to translate their states' CBO standards documents into languages other than English. However, the data collected for this study suggest that states have not extensively addressed how these CBO standards apply for English language learners.

Overall, one might conclude that the CBO standards documents—and the persons who have helped develop them—are committed to including all children, but, by and large, additional guidance and support is necessary in order for programs to know exactly what types of accommodations to make.

*Summary of Findings Regarding States With CBO Standards*

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CBO standards are becoming increasingly common. Over half of the states in the country have them. Most have been developed since 1998. Of the states that do not have CBO standards, over half were in the process of developing them. The linkage of the CBO standards to the K–12 standards seems to be an important factor in what CBO standards are like, with CBO standards that are more directly linked to the K–12 standards being more likely to be categorized as "primarily academic" and less likely to address developmental areas such as approaches to learning or social-emotional development. We now turn from examination of which states have CBO standards and what they look like to the inquiry about how the CBO standards were developed and how they are used.

## References

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## SECTION IV: DEVELOPING CHILD-BASED OUTCOME STANDARDS

Developing CBO standards for our nation's youngest children is viewed by many as an essential component of our early care and education system. And, as we have seen, states are heavily engaged in the process. Yet, very few data exist on how standards have been and are being developed throughout the nation. Who is involved in setting the standards? How long does it take? What was the impetus? What lessons can be learned from those states already completing standards?

This section of the report examines just these issues, focusing on how state-level agencies have been engaged in the process of developing CBO standards. In order to most thoroughly assess these issues, the discussion in this section focuses exclusively on states identified as currently *having standards*. These states include those listed in Table III-1– in columns I and II (Categories I and II, respectively). Category I includes states *that have standards that have been officially adopted or endorsed*, and Category II includes states *that have developed standards that have* not *been officially adopted or endorsed*. Important lessons about the development of standards emerge from both groups. In a subsequent section, we also analyze the lessons learned from Category III states (listed in column III of Table III-1), which were in the process of developing standards at the time of the interviews (see Section V).

Focusing on states that had published CBO standards (Categories I and II), in this section the following questions are discussed:

- How did the process get started?
- Was there a mandate to develop standards and, if so, from whom?
- Who was involved in developing the standards?
- How did the process unfold?
- How was the effort financed?

### *Getting Started: Identifying the Impetus*

The research team began its investigation of the process of standards development by exploring what prompted states to engage in this activity. Specifically, respondents in our study were asked to indicate whether the process of developing standards resulted from a "formal legislative mandate, departmental order, or a more informal recognition of a need for such a document." Tables IV-1 and IV-2 provide data representing how Category I and Category II states responded to this particular query. Specifically, Table IV-1 represents states *that have standards that have been officially adopted or endorsed* (19 states) while Table IV-2 represents states *that have standards that have* not *been officially adopted or endorsed* (eight states). These two tables identify what precipitated the process and who "led" the effort. In addition, Table IV-1 identifies state-level organizations or departments responsible for "adopting" their states' CBO standards.

Table IV-1

*Status of States with Adopted CBO Standards*

| Have standards that have been officially adopted or endorsed | Impetus | Lead Agency | Adopted/Endorsed By |
|---|---|---|---|

| Have standards that have been officially adopted or endorsed | Impetus | Lead Agency | Adopted/Endorsed By |
|---|---|---|---|
| Arkansas | I | DHS | BOE |
| Connecticut | SRL | DOE | BOE |
| Florida | SRL | OSR | Florida Partnership for School Readiness Board |
| Georgia | SRL | OSR | OSR |
| Illinois | I | DOE | BOE |
| Maine<br>Learning Results<br>Early Learning Results | <br>L<br>L | <br>DOE<br>DOE | <br>Legislature<br>Legislature |
| Maryland | D | DOE | BOE |
| Massachusetts | L | DOE | BOE |
| Michigan | I | DOE | BOE |
| Minnesota | I | CFL | CFL |
| Mississippi | I | DOE | BOE |
| New Jersey | L | DOE | BOE |
| New Mexico | L | OCD | OCD |
| New York | D | DOE | DOE |
| South Carolina | I | DOE | BOE |
| Texas | I | DOE | BOE |
| Utah | I | DOE | BOE |
| Vermont | I | DOE | BOE |
| Washington<br>ECEAP<br>OSPI | <br>L<br>L | <br>DOC<br>DOE | <br>CSU<br>OSPI |

D: departmental order
I: informal recognition
L: state legislation
BOE: State Board of Education
CFL: Department of Children and Family Learning
CSU: Children Services Unit
DHS: State Department of Human Services
DOE: State Department of Education
OCD: Office of Child Development
OSPI: Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
OSR: State Office of School Readiness
SRL: state school readiness legislation

Table IV-2

*Status of States with CBO Standards Not Formally Adopted/Endorsed at the Time of the Interview*

| Have standards that have not been officially adopted or endorsed | Impetus | Lead Agency |
|---|---|---|
| California | D | DOE |
| Colorado | I | DOE |
| Louisiana | D | DOE |
| Missouri | I | DOE |
| Ohio | L | DOE |
| Oklahoma | I | DOE |
| Pennsylvania | I | DOE |
| Rhode Island | I | DOE |

D: departmental order
I: informal recognition
L: state legislation
DOE: state department of education

Data from the survey revealed that nine of the 27 states that have standards began the development process in response to legislation passed in their state. As shown in Table IV-1, eight of these nine states (Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Maine—Learning Results and Early Learning Results, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico, and Washington—ECEAP and OSPI) have officially adopted or endorsed standards, whereas Ohio's standards (as shown in Table IV-2) are *not* officially adopted or endorsed. Based on these preliminary observations, there appeared to be some correlation between the impetus for the standards and the level of their adoption. This finding prompted the research team to examine the nature of legislative mandates.

As seen in Table IV-1, three states (Connecticut, Florida, and Georgia) responded to state school readiness legislation. Maine (Learning Results and Early Learning Results) responded to a directive from the state legislature to develop long-range educational goals and standards for school performance. Similarly, Massachusetts responded to legislation mandating education reform and state-funded preschool programs. New Jersey responded to a legislative mandate following the Abbott Court Decision to deliver full-day preschool services for three- and four-year-olds in 30 specified districts. Washington (ECEAP and OSPI) responded to legislation specifically mandating pre-kindergarten standards, and New Mexico responded to "accountability" legislation. Ohio (as shown in Table IV-2) also responded to legislation mandating pre-kindergarten standards. Unlike the other eight states with adopted CBO standards, Ohio's CBO standards were not formally adopted or endorsed at the time of the interview.

In addition to respondents citing state legislative mandates as the primary impetus for developing CBO standards, four states (California, Louisiana, Maryland, and New York) identified departmental orders from their state departments of education as the primary impetus. Two of these states (Maryland and New York) have standards that are officially adopted while two do not (California and Louisiana).

Finally, data revealed that over half of the remaining states with CBO standards (14) responded to yet another kind of impetus—a more informal recognition of a need for such standards. Leaders within the early childhood field (especially within the state department of education) began the

process without a mandate simply based on the premise that CBO standards would be helpful and/or might be necessary in the future. Respondents from a couple of states indicated that an "order" was imminent, and thus actively began the process of defining and developing CBO standards. In these cases, stakeholders from the early childhood community felt that it was more beneficial to be proactive and start the CBO standards development process than to be in a position of having to respond to a mandate from the legislature or governor.

States where respondents indicated that the process was begun based on an informal recognition of the need for CBO standards include Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, and Vermont. As shown in Table IV-1, nine of these 14 states (Arkansas, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, and Vermont) have officially adopted standards. Eight of these nine states responded to an informal request by their state departments of education to begin the process of developing standards while Arkansas responded to an informal request by Arkansas' Department of Human Services. Table IV-2 illustrates that five states (Colorado, Missouri, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island) that have standards that have not been officially adopted responded to an informal request by their state departments of education.

Data from the survey revealed that the impetus for the standards (e.g., legislative mandates, departmental orders, and a more informal recognition of a need) did indeed influence the standards development process. The *degree* to which these three different initiation points influenced the adoption of CBO standards, however, prompted further investigation.

*The influence of different approaches to incepting CBO standards.* Table IV-1 indicates that of the 19 states with officially adopted standards, eight states responded to legislative mandates, two states responded to departmental orders, and nine states responded to a more informal recognition of a need for standards. Based on the data, one might deduce that the two most influential impetuses among states with officially adopted standards are state legislative mandates and a more informal recognition of a need for developing CBO standards. Yet the *degree* to which these two approaches influenced the adoption process is not apparent. A comparison of the different approaches used by states with officially adopted standards to those used by states without adopted standards (Tables IV-1 and IV-2) presents a different perspective.

As shown in Table IV-1, eight of the nine states responding to state legislative mandates have officially adopted standards, while one state does not (as illustrated in Table IV-2). In another words, 89% of the states responding to legislative mandates have officially adopted standards. This finding suggests that legislative mandates not only encourage states to engage in the process of developing CBO standards but also enhance the prospect of standards being officially adopted or endorsed.

In contrast, as shown in Table IV-1, nine of the 14 states responding to a more informal recognition of a need for developing CBO standards have officially adopted standards, while five states do not (as illustrated in Table IV-2). In other words, 64% of the states responding to this impetus have officially adopted standards. This finding suggests that in gaining formal recognition of the standards a more informal recognition of a need for developing CBO standards is influential—yet not as influential as state legislative mandates. Finally, the degree of influence of a departmental order on the formal adoption of standards is less clear, as just 50% of the states that began with a departmental order have standards that are officially adopted or endorsed.

*Players in the Standards Development Process*

Respondents in the study were asked several general questions regarding the participation of individuals and state-level agency personnel in the standards development process. The research team sorted the survey data into three categories—*inceptor*, *facilitator*, and *partner*. Some of the

players, assuming multiple functions and roles in the development process, appear in more than one category. The three categories are defined as follows:

> *Inceptor*—an individual or group responsible for initiating or introducing the standards development process at the state level. Traditionally, this group is viewed as the "visionary" in this effort.
>
> *Facilitator*—an individual or group responsible for "making the process happen."
>
> *Partner*—an individual or group involved in the process.

*State departments of education: Inceptors and facilitators of CBO standards development.* As shown in Tables IV-1 and IV-2, 22 of the 27 states with CBO standards cited state departments of education as the "lead agency" in the standards development process. In addition, respondents in the 22 states reported the active participation of early childhood specialists located within state departments of education. This makes sense in light of the nation's growing concern with student learning and accountability and its efforts to have education be more driven by increasing accountability. Given this ethos, a critical function of state departments of education is facilitating the development of performance standards and assessment systems for all students, including young children.

Data from our study revealed that early childhood staff within state departments of education often assumed multiple roles and functions in the standards development process. In other words, in addition to serving as facilitator or lead agent in the process, some individuals within state departments of education—particularly state early childhood specialists—also assumed responsibility for incepting or initiating the development of CBO standards. For example, six of the eight states responding to legislative mandates (Connecticut, Maine—Learning Results and Early Learning Results, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, and Washington—ECEAP and OSPI) cited state departments of education as both inceptors *and* facilitators of the standards development process.

*Offices of school readiness: Facilitators of standards development.* Survey data in Table IV-1 indicate that in response to readiness legislation introduced by state governors, two states with officially adopted standards (Florida and Georgia) created offices of school readiness (OSR). Independent of state departments of education, OSRs focus primarily on the programs for preschool-age children.

Florida and Georgia's OSR took initiative and facilitated the development of state-level CBO standards. Connecticut also responded to school readiness legislation; however, respondents indicated that the State Department of Education was responsible for both incepting and facilitating the development of CBO standards. Connecticut's school readiness initiative is a joint effort between the State Department of Education and the State Department of Social Services and is not housed in a separate office created to manage a single readiness program.

*Other state-level agencies: Facilitators of standards development.* Although the preponderance of states identified state departments of education as the "lead agent" or primary facilitator in the standards development process, as shown in Table IV-1, five states (Arkansas, Minnesota, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, and Washington—ECEAP) identified other state-level agencies. For example, Arkansas identified its State Department of Human Services, Minnesota identified the Department of Children, Families, and Learning (Minnesota does not have a state department of education), and Washington—ECEAP identified the Department of Children.

*Partners in CBO standards development: A highly inclusive process.* In addition to some state-level agencies and departments serving as *facilitators* in the standards development,

respondents indicated that some state-level agencies and departments also served as *partners*. For example, as shown in Table IV-3, 10 of the 27 states reported the active engagement of state departments of social services and human services. Included in this category are Louisiana's Department of Health and Hospitals, Michigan's Department of Public Health, Missouri's Departments of Health and Mental Health, and Vermont's Department of Mental Health. Table IV-3 also illustrates that 10 of the 27 states with standards identified departments of special education as active partners in the standards development process. In addition, data revealed the participation of local school districts and higher education (including state and community colleges).

Table IV-3

*Partners in the Standards Development Process*

| State | Local School Districts | Dept. of Social Services/Human Services | Dept. of Special Education | Higher Education | Parents | External Consultants | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Arkansas | X | | X | X | | X | |
| California | | | | | X | X | |
| Colorado | X | X | X | X | X | | Business |
| Connecticut | X | | | X | | X | |
| Florida | X | X | X | X | | X | Library assoc./ business |
| Georgia | | | | | | X | Public health |
| Illinois | X | | | X | X | | |
| Louisiana | X | X | | X | | | |
| Maine | X | | | | | | |
| Learning Results | | | | | | | |
| Early Learning Results | X | | | | | | Child dev. service sites |
| Maryland | X | | | X | | X | |
| Massachusetts | X | | | | | | |
| Michigan | X | X | X | X | X | | State reading assoc. |
| Minnesota | X | | X | X | X | | Community agencies |
| Mississippi | X | X | | X | | | |
| Missouri | X | X | | | X | | Literacy grant program/PAT |
| New Jersey | X | X | | X | X | | Advocacy groups/Lucent Tech. |
| New Mexico | | | | | | X | |
| New York | X | | X | | X | | |
| Ohio | X | | | X | | | Dir. of State's Literacy Init. |
| Oklahoma | X | | | X | | | |
| Pennsylvania | X | | X | | | | |
| Rhode Island | X | X | X | X | X | | Dept. C.Y. &F. |
| South Carolina | X | X | | | | | State Legislature |
| Texas | X | | | | | X | |
| Utah | X | | | X | | | |
| Vermont | X | X | | X | X | X | Business |
| Washington | | | | | X | X | |
| ECEAP | | | | | | X | |
| OSPI | X | | | X | | | |
| Total | 25 | 10 | 8 | 17 | 11 | 11 | |

Specifically, as shown in Table IV-3, 24 of the 27 states reported the involvement of *local* school districts (as distinct from *state* boards of education) in developing CBO standards. Personnel from these local school districts represented public preschool and kindergarten programs, as well as school district administrators responsible for programs K–12. In view of CBO standards linkage to programs serving older, school-age children, this finding is not surprising. Illinois's State Division of Early Childhood created an early learning standards project team comprised of eight people including representation from four school districts. The Division reported that some school districts "had already started to develop something on their own that [we] liked."

Other partners in the development of CBO standards included representatives from higher education and parents. As shown in Table IV-3, 17 of the 27 states reported the participation of higher education, including teacher educators. Eleven states (California, Colorado, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington—ECEAP) reported the involvement of parents in developing CBO standards. In addition to parent participation, Missouri reported the active involvement of parent organizations. Specifically, Missouri invited the participation of the organization Parents as Teachers (PAT) in developing its CBO standards.

*Pre-existing initiatives as facilitators in the development process.* Respondents from all 27 states with CBO standards reported that standards development was not an isolated process. In other words, a climate or expectation for working collaboratively on a variety of early childhood education issues had already been cultivated, thus the call for developing CBO standards at the state level fell on fertile ground. In many states, a statewide early childhood commission, statewide partnerships, and other avenues for early childhood work already existed. Data revealed that these pre-existing early childhood initiatives facilitated the standards development process.

As a result of school readiness legislation in Florida, Georgia, and Maryland, partnerships were already in place to engage in the standards development process. Florida's Readiness Partnership Board represented a cross-section of partners including business and education. Georgia's Office of School Readiness programs includes partners from all the state's current early learning initiatives including Head Start, public health, and four-year-old programs. When Maryland's Department of Education expressed a need to articulate outcome standards for children entering kindergarten, the department joined with partners already established from Maryland's Model for School Readiness.

A respondent in Pennsylvania noted that the process of developing CBO standards was a partnership, with the department of education working collaboratively with other state-level organizations. The Partnership for Educational Excellence Network (PEEN) is a partnership between Pennsylvania's State Department of Education and the Pennsylvania Association of Intermediate Units. These intermediate units are educational entities funded by the state that work directly with school districts.

In Arkansas, the process to develop CBO standards was initiated by the Arkansas Early Childhood Commission. Established in 1991, the Commission consisted of a broad-based constituency of state-level agencies. Thus in 1996, when the state first began to explore the issue of standards development for young children, a pre-existing commission was already in place. Based on its ongoing relationship, the Commission was well positioned to create task forces to engage in the activity of standards development.

Respondents noted that these collaborations or partnerships were often enriched with the involvement of early childhood colleagues—both as individuals and as groups. For example, Maine prevailed on an established network, the New England Early Childhood Special Education Coordinators, to help guide and support its standards development process. According to one respondent:

> We have been meeting on a regular basis for the past 10 years and have routinely shared projects and documents. The group has found the culture of New England to be similar across the states, thus we work together toward providing support in our respective efforts.

In sum, data revealed that respondents from most states described the standards development process as highly inclusive and requiring the input and advice from a broad spectrum of stakeholders both inside and outside the "early childhood community." Representatives from the

early childhood community typically included administrators and practitioners from Head Start, public and private preschools, child care, and representatives from state AEYCs.

*The role of public input.* In some states public forums were held inviting even broader input on the standards development process. For example, Vermont reported that its development process consisted of 40 community focus forums including parents, teachers, school administrators, school board members, and community members. Vermont's standards document, Vermont's Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities, boasts that the standards were "worked on by over 4,000 Vermonters!"

In addition to public forums, respondents consistently extolled the benefits of focus groups. Often described as facilitating the rigorous "back and forth" process of articulating and reviewing states' CBO standards, focus groups provided an essential feedback loop for standards developers to incorporate comments and reactions from the broader community. According to New Jersey's standards document, Early Childhood Education Program Expectations: Standards of Quality (2000):

> Three regional focus groups were convened allowing stakeholders additional opportunities to provide feedback. The task force reported considering all comments in preparing the final document.

The use of focus groups and other avenues to gather input from the broader community is indicative of standards developers' intentions to have their CBO standards development process be inclusive of the wider community. Data revealed that states consistently viewed the CBO standards development process as a shared responsibility. Minnesota's standards document succinctly captures the spirit of collaboration endemic to the standards development process:

> [F]amily members, teachers and caregivers, community members, and policymakers each recognize the importance of this shared responsibility and accountability in order to achieve positive outcomes for children.

*External consultants: Partners in CBO standards development.* As shown in Table IV-3, respondents from nine of the 27 states with standards reported the involvement of external consultants. These states include Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, New Mexico, Texas, and Vermont. External consultants tended to be either state or national experts in early care and education with expertise in areas such as assessment, accreditation, and standards development.

The *degree* to which consultants were involved in the development of CBO standards, however, varied across states. Data revealed that in six of the nine states with external consultants (Arkansas, Connecticut, Florida, Maryland, Texas, and Vermont), respondents described consultants as "partners" in the process, guiding and coordinating the standards development process. In California, Georgia, and New Mexico, respondents reported that external contractors were responsible for most of the writing of the CBO standards, and hence played a more central role in the development process. In these cases, external consultants served more as "lead agents" than did external consultants in the other six states.

*Orientation of the standards: Influence of state departments of education.* Since state departments of education focus on K–12 students' academic achievement, one might logically hypothesize that standards incepted by state departments of education might be more academically oriented than those incepted and developed by other state-level agencies or departments. In view of our nation's current political climate of accountability for students' learning, the issue of "developmental versus academic" is worth explicating, in particular, as it relates to *who* incepted

these CBO standards. To better understand this issue, the research team used the rating scale described in Table III-5 to classify the orientation of states' CBO standards.

As shown in Table III-5, 19 of the CBO standards were rated as primarily developmental, while 10 state standards documents were classified as primarily academic. Using the state rather than the CBO standards document as the unit of analysis, the table also shows that 18 (Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Maine—Early Learning Results, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Texas, Utah, and Washington—ECEAP and OSPI) of the 27 states have standards primarily developmental in orientation, while 10 states (Georgia, Louisiana, Maine—Learning Results, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Vermont) have standards that are primarily academic in orientation. Note that Maine has two sets of standards—one rated as developmentally oriented (Early Learning Results) and the other rated as academically oriented (Learning Results), and Washington has two sets of standards that are both developmentally oriented. In other words, 64% of these states have standards primarily developmental in orientation, while 36% of the states with standards have an academic orientation.

Regarding the *orientation* of CBO standards incepted by state departments of education, data revealed that nine of the 10 states with CBO standards rated as primarily academic in orientation identified state departments of education as incepting the standards (Georgia's standards were incepted by Georgia's Office of School Readiness), while 15 of the 18 states categorized as having standards with a primarily developmental orientation also identified state departments of education. The remaining three states (Arkansas, Minnesota, and New Mexico) identified other state-level agencies as incepting their states' CBO standards. In other words, 90% of the states' CBO standards rated as primarily academically oriented were incepted by state departments of education, and 83% of CBO standards considered primarily developmentally oriented were also incepted by state departments of education. In view of the data, it is clear that state departments of education did indeed play an important role in both incepting and developing CBO standards. Yet the degree to which state departments of education directly influenced the orientation of CBO standards beckons further investigation.

*Literacy initiatives and their impact on defining CBO standards.* In light of our nation's growing push for early literacy, the research team identified those states developing standards out of divisions of "literacy" (not including family literacy programs) primarily located within state departments of education. This investigation was based on the assumption that a literacy focus may result in early learning standards that are primarily academic in orientation.

As shown in Table IV-4, data from the survey revealed only two of the 27 states developed standards out of their "literacy" divisions: Mississippi (Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts) and New York (Division of Early Literacy). Returning to Table III-5, Mississippi's early learning standards are described as primarily developmental in orientation while New York's are primarily academic. In fact, New York's standards document underscores an explicit emphasis on literacy:

> The New York State Education Department has adopted the national reading goal that all children will be able to read independently and well by the end of grade three. To support this goal, the Department has undertaken a number of initiatives related to early literacy. This document, *Early Literacy Guidance: Pre-kindergarten–Grade 3*, builds on and enhances previous English language arts documents of the Department.

Thus, based on this finding, one cannot hypothesize that departments focusing on literacy necessarily produce early learning standards that are more academically oriented.

Further investigation of the literacy issue and its correlation to primarily academic or cognitively oriented standards prompted the research team to identify which of the 27 states included "literacy interests" apart from departments of literacy in the development of their CBO standards. States including representatives from the literacy community (not family literacy) in the development of their standards included Connecticut (library associations), Michigan (state reading association), Missouri (literacy grant program), and Ohio (director of Ohio's literacy initiative). It is interesting to note that Connecticut, Michigan, and Missouri have standards that are primarily developmental in orientation, while Ohio's are primarily academic. Again, based on this finding, one cannot hypothesize that participants expressing "literacy interests" in the standards development process necessarily produce early learning standards that are primarily academic in orientation.

*Logistics of Developing CBO Standards*

In addition to looking at who was involved, the research team was also interested in collecting data on the logistics of the CBO standards development process—how long it took, what materials were used as a basis for decision, and how the process was funded. In the following section, data gleaned from both the interviews and the CBO standards documents themselves are presented to provide more detailed information about the development process.

*Time frame for developing standards.* Respondents in our study reported that the standards development process ranged from four months (Ohio) to five years (Maine – Early Learning Results). Data revealed that 15 of the 27 states with CBO standards developed their standards within one to two years. Specifically, 10 of the 27 states (Connecticut, Georgia, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, New Jersey, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Washington—ECEAP) developed their standards in one year, while five states (Florida, Illinois, Minnesota, New Mexico, and Pennsylvania) developed their standards in two years.

Data also revealed that the term "time frame" had different interpretations. For example, some respondents suggested that "time frame" encompassed the time it took to define *and* implement CBO standards, while others interpreted "time frame" as representing exclusively the development process. Respondents in Georgia indicated:

> The process took about one year—from the time of conceptualization to implementation.

Similarly, a respondent in Arkansas reported that the state's CBO standards took three years to develop and one year to "roll it out statewide and develop a train-the-trainer program." In addition, a respondent in New Mexico reported:

> This effort has taken about two years to date. We expect the pilot to take at least another two or three years.

Finally, a respondent in Maine—Early Learning Standards reported:

> The Department of Education developed one domain at a time and then the various child development service (CDS) sites refined each domain. In addition, they used some regional child development staff. The process has taken five years, one year for each domain. The physical domain, however, was developed two years in a row.

*Documents, theories, and standards consulted during CBO standards development.* The research team was interested in identifying what theories, approaches, standards, and other documents were consulted in the CBO standards development process. Table IV-4 indicates that

states consulted a myriad of materials when asked, "Are your state-level agency/organization's early learning standards based on a particular view, theory of learning, conceptual framework, and/or research base?" Specifically, states developing CBO standards consulted developmental theories, national early childhood standards, NEGP's dimensions of readiness, and Head Start's Performance Standards, as well as assessment tools and curricula.

Table IV-4

*Documents, Theories, and Standards Consulted During the CBO Standards Development Process*

| State | NEGP | Head Start | Developmental Theorists | NAEYC's DAP | Assessment or Curricula | State's Own Standards K–12 | National Standards/ Framework |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Arkansas | | X | X | X | X | X | |
| California | X | | X | X | X | X | |
| Colorado | X | | X | X | | X | |
| Connecticut | X | X | X | X | X | X | |
| Florida | X | X | X | X | X | X | |
| Georgia | | | X | X | X | X | |
| Illinois | | | X | X | | X | |
| Louisiana | | X | X | X | X | X | |
| Maine<br>Learning Results<br>Early Learning Results | | X | | X | | X | |
| Maryland | X | | | | | X | X |
| Massachusetts | | | X | | X | X | |
| Michigan | | | X | X | | X | |
| Minnesota | X | | X | X | X | X | |
| Mississippi | | | X | X | | X | |
| Missouri | | | X | X | X | X | |
| New Jersey | | | | X | | X | |
| New Mexico | | | X | X | | X | |
| New York | | | | | | X | |
| Ohio | | | | | | X | |
| Oklahoma | | | X | | | X | |
| Pennsylvania | | | X | X | | X | X |
| Rhode Island | | X | X | X | | X | |
| South Carolina | | | X | X | X | X | X |
| Texas | | | | | | X | |
| Utah | | | X | X | | X | |
| Vermont | | X | X | | X | X | X |
| Washington<br>ECEAP<br>OSPI | X | X<br>X | | X<br>X | X | X<br>X | |
| Total | 7 | 9 | 20 | 21 | 12 | 28 | 4 |

Table IV-4 illustrates that 22 of the 27 states consulted the work of developmental theorists, and 20 of the respondents specifically referenced NAEYC's document, *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs*. Seven of the 27 states (California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Maryland, Minnesota, and Washington—ECEAP) reported consulting NEGP's developmental domains, and seven of the states (Connecticut, Florida, Louisiana, Maine, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington—ECEAP and OSPI) consulted Head Start's Performance Standards. Not surprisingly, all 27 states consulted their own states' standards for K–12, while three states (Maryland, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina) consulted other national frameworks or standards—in particular math and science standards. Thus, as Table IV-4 reveals, although states may not have *directly modeled* their early learning standards on another theory or assessment tool,

participants in the standards development process did, in fact, *consult* other materials and "best practices."

Another important dimension of this discussion is how other materials, approaches, and theories influenced the orientation of states' early learning standards. Of the seven states reporting the consultation of NEGP's developmental domains, six (California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Minnesota, and Washington—ECEAP) produced CBO standards rated as primarily developmental. Of the seven states where respondents indicated standards developers consulted Head Start's Performance Standards, three (Louisiana, Maine, and Vermont) produced primarily academically oriented standards. These findings are not surprising in light of the developmental orientation of both these national early learning standards. In addition, three states (Maryland, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina) reported consulting national K–12 standards. Each of these states developed CBO standards that are primarily academic in orientation.

*The influence of other states' CBO standards.* The research team was also interested in the degree to which CBO standards developers consulted other CBO standards documents. As shown in Table IV-5, 18 of the 27 states with CBO standards reported reviewing other states' early learning standards, while 10 states reported not reviewing other states' early learning standards. Washington has two sets of standards: ECEAP consulted other states' standards, while OSPI did not. Ohio's standards document, *Connections...An Early Childhood Education Curriculum Framework for Continuity*, noted that their standards

> began as the British Columbia Ministry of Education *Primary Program* that was adapted and reorganized by the Iowa and Nebraska Departments of Education.

Similarly, Louisiana's Standards for Programs Serving Four-Year-Old Children reported that its Guiding Principles are modeled directly after Connecticut's. In most cases, however, other states' standards and documents were used as points of reference and consulted for general content purposes but not for purposes of direct alignment and modeling.

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Table IV-5

*Other States' CBO Standards Used as Resources in the Development Process*

| State | Did *not* consult other states' standards | Consulted other states' standards | Consulted International Standards |
|---|---|---|---|
| Arkansas | X | | |
| California | | X | |
| Colorado | X | | |
| Connecticut | | X | X |
| Florida | | X | |
| Georgia | | X | |
| Illinois | | X | |
| Louisiana | | X | |
| Maine<br>Learning Results<br>Early Learning Results | | X | |
| Maryland | | X | |
| Massachusetts | X | | |
| Michigan | | X | X |
| Minnesota | X | | |
| Mississippi | X | | |
| Missouri | | X | |
| New Jersey | | X | |
| New Mexico | | X | |
| New York | | X | |
| Ohio | | X | X |
| Oklahoma | X | | |
| Pennsylvania | X | | |
| Rhode Island | | X | |
| South Carolina | | X | |
| Texas | X | | |
| Utah | X | | |
| Vermont | | X | |
| Washington<br>ECEAP<br>OSPI | X | X | |
| Total | 10 | 18 | 3 |

Connecticut's *Preschool Curriculum Framework & Benchmarks for Children in Preschool Programs* was identified by six states (Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Missouri, Rhode Island, and Vermont) as a state CBO standards document that was consulted during the development process. Four respondents (Connecticut, Florida, Missouri, and Rhode Island) cited Minnesota's *Early Childhood Indicators of Progress: A Resource Guide*. Three respondents (Florida, Louisiana, and Maryland) cited California's *Desired Results for Children and Families* as a useful resource. In fact, Florida described California's *Desired Results* as "the most advanced in terms of process and thinking."

Respondents from a few states indicated that developers within their states had looked beyond the United States for examples of CBO standards. Connecticut, Michigan, and Ohio consulted British Columbia's early learning standards. In addition, Michigan consulted New Zealand's early learning standards.

*Funding CBO standards development.* As demonstrated in Table IV-6, a variety of funding sources were used to finance states' CBO standards, including federal funds, state dollars, and private dollars such as grants from foundations or corporations. Twenty-three of the 27 states reported receiving funding from state agencies and departments, in particular state departments of education. Specifically, respondents reported the use of "state dollars" (which may overlap with federal dollars, including Title I and Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) funds).

In addition to state department of education funds, four states (California, Colorado, Minnesota, and Rhode Island) reported using CCDBG funds. Interestingly, these states' CBO standards were rated as primarily developmental in orientation. Furthermore, data revealed that utilization of other federal funds, including IDEA, Title I, Even Start, and Special Education, also yielded CBO standards rated as primarily developmental. This was true in Connecticut, Maine, and Missouri. The exception is Louisiana. Although Louisiana used federal funding, including Special Education and Title I, in addition to some state early childhood development funds, the state's CBO standards were rated as primarily academic in orientation.

Table IV-6

*Funding Sources*

| State | Federal: CCDBG | Federal: IDEA | Federal: Other | State | Private | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Arkansas | | | | X | | AECC |
| California | X | | | X | | |
| Colorado | | | Title I, Even Start | | | |
| Connecticut | | X | | X | | |
| Florida | | | | X | X | Readiness Partnership Board |
| Georgia | | | | | X | |
| Illinois | | | | X | | |
| Louisiana | | | Spec. Ed; Title I | X | X | |
| Maine<br>Learning Results<br>Early Learning Results | | X | | X | | |
| Maryland | | | | X | | |
| Massachusetts | | | | X | | |
| Michigan | | | | | X | |
| Minnesota | X | | | X | | |
| Mississippi | | | | X | | |
| Missouri | | | Some Head Start funds | X | | |
| New Jersey | | | | X | | |
| New Mexico | | | | X | | |
| New York | | | | X no special $ | | |
| Ohio | | | | X | | |
| Oklahoma | | | | X | | |

| State | Federal: CCDBG | Federal: IDEA | Federal: Other | State | Private | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pennsylvania | | | | PEEN | | State legislature |
| Rhode Island | X | | | X | | |
| South Carolina | | | | X | | |
| Texas | | | | X | | |
| Utah | | | | X | | |
| Vermont | | | | | | |
| Washington<br>ECAP<br>OSPI | | | | <br>X<br>X | | |
| Total | 3 | 2 | 3 | 24 | 4 | |

AECC – Arkansas Early Childhood Commission
PEEN - Partnership for Educational Excellence Network

New York, Utah, and Vermont reported that no specific money was earmarked for this effort. These states' respondents reported that the process of convening and developing standards was viewed as "part of their job," and fiscal support came from the general operating budgets of their respective departments of education.

*Summary of Findings Related to the CBO Standards Development Process*

States with CBO standards consistently reported that defining and developing standards is an inclusive process, requiring teamwork and consensus-building both inside and outside the early childhood community. In most instances, the standards development process began with a "visionary," an individual or state-level agency responsible for incepting the standards. The inceptor typically partnered with other organizations and opened the process to input from different constituencies. The leadership role of state departments of education figures prominently in our discussion, particularly in states with officially adopted or endorsed standards. Having looked at the CBO standards development process for states that had CBO standards in place, we now turn to a discussion of the developmental process in states that were working toward CBO standards at the time of the interview.

## SECTION V: DEVELOPING STANDARDS—THE REMAINING STATES

In the previous section of this report, we discussed states that had completed their standards. In this section, we turn to two different groups of states; first, those states that have made a commitment to standards and are currently in the process of developing them, and second, those states that, at the time of the study, had not embarked on the process. We examined these in-process states for several purposes. First, we were interested in discerning if the patterns established in the states where the standards have been completed differ from those within states that are currently developing CBO standards. For example, were they motivated by the same forces? Did their work evolve with similar foci and emphases? Did they relate to departments of education in similar ways? How were the standards related to K–12 standards? Second, we were interested to see if the in-process states learned from the states that have completed their work. Was the process streamlined? Did the in-process states adapt or adopt pre-existing standards?

For the second group of states—those where standards are not in evidence—we were anxious to learn what factors might have led them not to focus on standards development, what if anything might have motivated them to develop CBO standards, and what other early childhood initiatives were evidenced in these states.

### *The In-Process States*

As noted in Section III, 12 states plus Washington, DC report efforts currently underway to develop standards for children's learning prior to kindergarten entry. As shown in Table V-1, these in-process states include Arizona, Delaware, Hawaii, Indiana, Kentucky, Nevada, North Carolina, Oregon, Tennessee, Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. Recall that in-process states were defined as those where a CBO standards document was not available for review but where the state has an initiative in place to develop CBO standards—an official work group has been formed to study the issue and develop recommendations and/or CBO standards.

#### *Status of In-Process States*

As one might expect, the 13 in-process states are at very different stages in their standards' development efforts. In view of the wide variability, the research team created a continuum to further classify the states. The criteria for each of the three categories within the continuum follow.

#### ***Categories of In-Process States' Status***

A. **Advanced States.** States that are "furthest along" in developing CBO standards. These states did not have a finalized draft available for review but are in the very final stages of developing a document.

A. **Progressing States.** States that are "far along" in developing CBO standards. The progressing states have been engaged in the CBO standards development process and have made progress toward a draft document. They were, however, not in the final stages of completing their document.

B. **Beginning States.** States that are at the "very beginning" phase of developing CBO standards. The states categorized as "beginning states" were engaged in the first phase of conceptualizing and defining CBO standards.

Table V-1

*Status of In-Process States*

| Advanced | Progressing | Beginning |
|---|---|---|
| Arizona | Kentucky | Delaware |
| Indiana | Nevada | Hawaii |
| Washington, DC | Tennessee | North Carolina |
| Wyoming | Virginia | Oregon |
| | | Wisconsin |

*Advanced states*. As shown in Table V-1, Arizona, Indiana, Washington, DC, and Wyoming are the furthest along in developing CBO standards. At the time of the interview, Arizona had developed and finalized CBO standards, titled *Early Childhood Education Standards*, in four developmental domains including language and literary, math, social/emotional, and physical. In addition to these standards, Arizona respondents reported that the state is currently engaged in developing CBO standards for science and the arts. They intend to publish these standards as a group and to have them available for programs in July, 2003. Arizona reported:

> Drafts of the standards have gone to 13 focus groups across the state. We have received input from parents to educators. Next we need to go to an editor and have them translated [into Spanish] and then have them printed.

At the time of the interview, Indiana was also very close to completing its CBO standards and having its document available to the public. Entitled *Foundations for Young Children to the Indiana Academic Standards*, this document representing six content areas—language arts, math, science, social studies, physical education and health, and visual arts and music—has been finalized and piloted in 50 diverse locations around the state. Referring to the standards as Foundations, a respondent from Indiana reported:

> The Foundations have been piloted in public special needs preschool classrooms, Head Start classrooms, faith-based preschools, family day care, center-based care, and also with parents. We would like to see the Foundations made available to and used in any situation where an adult (and not just a teacher or parent) is interacting with a three-, four-, or young five-year-old.

Data revealed that the standards development process for states categorized as "advanced" was similar in many respects to states with CBO standards. For example, the process was characterized as highly inclusive and states reported their CBO standards linking to K–12 standards, as well as school readiness initiatives. In addition, the content areas of standards were broadly defined and appeared to include a broad range of developmental domains.

Similar to responses from individuals in states with CBO standards, respondents from Arizona and Indiana described their processes as highly inclusive and embracing input from a variety of stakeholders, including parents. In addition, both states broadly conceived their states' standards to include content areas beyond literacy and mathematics. Data also revealed that, consistent with states having CBO standards, Indiana and Arizona reported that their CBO standards are linked to K–12; however, Indiana wanted to create a more "user-friendly document":

> The state legislature had mandated K–12 standards, and we felt that we needed a more user-friendly document. We (Division of Prime Time and the Division of Exceptional Learners) started to develop the foundations. (We felt if we didn't begin designing the foundations, the state legislature would eventually mandate standards.)

A respondent from the District of Columbia also reported that the content area of its standards is broadly defined to include language and early literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, fine arts, health and safety, personal and social development, physical development, and technology applications and world languages. The CBO standards have been developed for three- to five-year-olds and are based on the National Education Goals Panel conception of school readiness. Washington, DC's process for developing CBO standards was highly inclusive. It has had a "draft" document since 2000, and at the time of the data collection, the CBO standards had yet to be formally named.

Similar to Washington, DC, Wyoming's standards were still unnamed at the time of the interview, yet the state had made significant progress in the CBO development process. Wyoming's early learning standards are similar to the eight content areas used in Head Start. Respondents from Wyoming reported that they used Head Start's Outcome Frameworks as they "link[ed] best with our state's K–12 standards." In addition, Wyoming expressed a linkage to school readiness outcomes especially for programs targeting children at risk and children with disabilities.

As with the other in-process states, Wyoming's process for defining and developing CBO standards was highly inclusive:

> The Council [Wyoming Early Childhood Development Council] started the process through the Early Care and Education Committee. We decided that the department of education would lead up the effort for the Early Learning Standards Task Force. We created a task force representing early childhood interests in all areas of the state, and in all the state's agencies.

*Progressing states.* As noted in Table V-1, Kentucky, Nevada, Tennessee, and Virginia have been classified as progressing states. Each is progressing, however, in slightly different ways.

Kentucky is working on an initiative to develop two sets of standards. Specifically, Kentucky reported developing learning indicators for children from birth to age four, in addition to standards for children ages four to five (the pre-K year before entering kindergarten). These latter CBO standards will be directly linked to the state's K–12 standards. The Kentucky Department of Education convened a work group to develop standards, benchmarks, a developmental continuum for each benchmark, and example behaviors for each step within the developmental continuum for children ages four to five. At the time of the interview, however, none of these documents were available for review:

> At the very least, the standards and benchmarks, if not the developmental continuum, will be completed by June [2002]. The completed sections will then be given to those state early childhood professionals who volunteer to review them. Nationally recognized early childhood experts will also be asked to review the document.

In Nevada, the legislature mandated one indicator related to young children's achievement outcomes—that 70% of children attending Even Start programs will increase their score on the Preschool Language Score III (PLSIII). The Nevada Department of Education has led a process whereby the state has developed strategies to adopt the language indicators on the PLSIII for programs receiving state funds. At the time of the interview, respondents indicated that Nevada was now looking at developing CBO standards across developmental domains. The Department of Education has taken the lead in the development process to date, although additional input from other stakeholders was described as "ideal" for efforts to develop CBO standards for other developmental domains.

Tennessee reported that efforts are underway to develop CBO standards for three- and four-year-old children, with the state department of education taking the lead. As in some of the states with CBO standards in place, the process will begin with a limited number of developmental domains:

> The lead agency is the State Department of Education. Our family literacy consortium is working directly on developing these early learning standards. We are not working on standards for infants and toddlers. The department of education only serves three to fours in our preschool effort. We have just revised our reading and math standards K–8 and are now working on doing the same research-based standards for three- and four-year-olds. We are primarily looking at emergent reading and math—as we are getting pressure to look at these two areas first—yet we are also looking at other domains of development such as social/emotional development.

Tennessee described the standards development process as highly collaborative and inclusive:

> We are collaborating with Head Start, Tennessee Education Association, Tennessee's AEYC, and Even Start. We are interested in creating a seamless program between early childhood and elementary.

Similarly, respondents from Virginia described the process for developing CBO standards as highly inclusive:

> This effort is happening out of the state's Department of Instruction. We are in the process of asking three specialists from different universities to look at our plan for their comment and review. And as they see fit, they will be adding and deleting. Next, we will bring their recommendations to a panel of 20 early childhood educators representing different programs, including Head Start, public schools, and Virginia's Pre-school Initiative for at-risk four-year-olds. This group will help to write specific activities for teacher instruction addressing what at-risk four-year-olds will need to know in the classroom.

Data revealed that the standards development process for "progressing" states is in some ways similar to that of "advanced" states. For example, with the exception of Nevada, both categories of states reported the standards development process as highly collaborative and inclusive. In contrast with advanced states, however, progressing states tended to describe their CBO standards as beginning with a more narrow focus in terms of the developmental domains that will be covered. It is interesting to note, however, that similar to states with CBO standards, both categories of in-process states reported that their development processes include efforts to ensure that the CBO standards are linked to the K–12 education standards.

*Beginning states*. As illustrated in Table V-1, Delaware, Hawaii, North Carolina, Oregon, and Wisconsin are at the beginning or conceptual stage of the standards development process.

Delaware reported that it has taken steps toward developing CBO standards; at the time of the interview, however, the state appeared to have more of an interest in developing program standards:

> Discussion about early learning standards has been introduced by the department of education, but not extensively. Current interest is with program standards. A draft of program standards has been developed.

Another respondent from Delaware reported:

> We are about to enter into a contract with a consultant to establish performance indicators for preschool over the next year [2002]. Initially, these standards will be just for four-year-olds. The state department of education will fund this initiative with some money from Special Education. We hope that this process will be completed by the end of 2002.

Similarly, Hawaii is still in the discussion phase of the standards development process. Respondents in both Delaware and Hawaii reported that their states were interested in developing program standards prior to developing child-based outcome standards. A respondent in Hawaii reported:

> Hawaii has focused on developing program standards for its pre-kindergarten population three to five. Their School Readiness Task Force, however, is responsible for developing the "standards" component of the "Pre-Plus" Program and, toward that end, has convened a sub-committee that is charged with developing early learning standards—child outcomes—for children ages three to five years of age. The Task Force intends to use the child outcomes developed by the sub-committee to help analyze childcare settings and to help determine weaknesses in childcare curricula and programs.

North Carolina is also at the beginning stages of this process and is planning to develop CBO standards, in addition to program quality standards, for pre-kindergarten programs beginning in September, 2002:

> The Department of Public Instruction will have the lead in the process. They anticipate that the process will include input from a variety of stakeholders within the state, including early childhood programs, higher education, and the K–12 community. They will convene a state-level committee to work on the standards and use a focus group process to collect input from stakeholders in the community. The program standards will likely build upon program standards developed for the new More at Four pre-K program. The standards would apply to the More at Four program, as well as all state-funded pre-kindergarten programs.

A respondent in Oregon reported that the process of developing CBO standards is occurring within the context of developing and measuring children's school readiness skills based on the National Education Goals Panel's document, *Ready to Learn Goals*:

> In the past seven months [since May, 2001] the department of education has been developing a very preliminary draft that is intended to align early childhood standards with Oregon's content and curriculum standards, and particularly with the benchmarks for math and literacy in the third grade.

At the time of the interview, Oregon reported having adopted Head Start's Outcome and Performance Standards; however, the state is currently moving beyond the conceptualization phase and into development:

> At this time, preschool standards for state-funded preschools use the Head Start Outcome and Performance Standards. But there is definitely discussion "on the table," across the state, and across agencies to develop statewide preschool benchmarks and appropriate assessment tools.

Finally, an individual from Wisconsin reported that it is considering conceptualizing CBO standards as part of the Indicators Project. Wisconsin is one of 14 states participating in this project funded by the Ford and Packard Foundations to develop school-age readiness indicators. Although the grant is not focusing on state-level CBO standards, Wisconsin suggested that the Indicators Project will provide an opportunity to at least think about the process:

We are just starting on this process. Rhode Island is the lead state on this grant. It is too early, however, to see how this is going to work. We are also not sure if the indicators will be child-based outcomes.

*Time Frame for Expected Completion of CBO Standards in In-Process States*

Respondents were asked to project when their states might complete their current CBO standards development processes. Table V-2 shows the projected time frames that were provided.

Table V-2

*Estimated Time Frames for Completion of CBO Standards for In-Process States*

| State | Expected Completion/ Finalization Date |
|---|---|
| Arizona | 2003 |
| Delaware | 2002 |
| Hawaii | ND |
| Indiana | 2002 |
| Kentucky<br>Birth – 4<br>Pre-K: 4 – 5 | <br>2002<br>2002 |
| Nevada | ND |
| North Carolina | ND |
| Oregon | ND |
| Tennessee | ND |
| Virginia | 2002 |
| Washington, DC | ND |
| Wisconsin | ND |
| Wyoming | 2002 |

ND – no date reported

As indicated in Table V-2, respondents from five of the 12 in-process states expected that their states would finalize CBO standards documents by the end of 2002. These states include Delaware, Indiana, Kentucky, Virginia, and Wyoming. Arizona respondents projected that their CBO standards would be completed in 2003. Respondents in the remaining six states (Hawaii, Nevada, North Carolina, Oregon, Tennessee, and Wisconsin) plus Washington, DC indicated that while the process of developing CBO standards was underway, they could not project expected dates of completion. For example, Washington, DC reported that its CBO standards have been in draft form for two years and could not predict when they would be available to the public. These data suggest that within a relatively short period of time, the majority of states will have CBO standards in place.

*State Departments of Education: Inceptors and Facilitators of CBO Standards Development*

Data revealed that nine of the 13 in-process states (Arizona, Delaware, Hawaii, Indiana, Kentucky (Pre-K), Nevada, Oregon, Tennessee, and Wyoming), or 69%, identified state departments of education as "lead agents" or facilitators in defining and developing CBO standards. (Hawaii, however, described the development process as a partnership, with two distinct entities—Hawaii's Department of Education and the School Readiness Task Force—taking the lead.) As shown in Tables IV-1 and IV-2, 22 of the 27 states with standards, or 81%, reported state departments of

education as the lead agent responsible for facilitating the standards development process. Based on this analysis of in-process states, it appears that similar to states with CBO standards, state departments of education continue to assume primary responsibility in promoting the development of state-level CBO standards.

Similar to states with CBO standards, respondents of in-process states described their state departments of education as both inceptors and facilitators in the standards development process. Recalling that, inceptors are defined as an individual or group responsible for initiating or introducing the standards development process at the state-level, and facilitators are defined as "lead agents." Simply put, state departments of education were viewed as both visionaries and agents who made this process happen.

Table V-3

*Lead Agency for In-Process States*

| State | Lead Agency |
|---|---|
| Arizona | DOE |
| Delaware | DOE |
| Hawaii | DOE/SRTF |
| Indiana | DOE |
| Kentucky<br>Birth – 4<br>Pre-K: 4 – 5 | <br>OG<br>DOE |
| Nevada | DOE |
| North Carolina | DPI |
| Oregon | DOE |
| Tennessee | DOE |
| Virginia | DOI |
| Washington, DC | OM |
| Wisconsin | DWFD |
| Wyoming | DOE |

DOE: State Department of Education
DOI: State Department of Instruction
DPI: State Department of Public Instruction
DWFD: State Department of Work Force Development
OG: Office of the Governor
OM: Office of the Mayor
SRTF: School Readiness Task Force

Respondents in Hawaii, Kentucky, and Wyoming, however, reported their state initiatives had been initiated in their governors' offices. Based on the data, one can hypothesize that some state governors' staff not only served as lead agents in the development process but also as inceptors. Hawaii reported that the School Readiness Task Force is comprised of both the State Department of Education and the Office of the Governor. In Wyoming, an early childhood council was created out of the governor's office:

> A council was put together called the Wyoming Early Childhood Development Council. The council is a governor's appointed group including the state's department of education, department of family services, department of health, as well as other

representatives from other early childhood groups in the state including Head Start.

Kentucky (Birth–4), however, presents a different scenario. The governor's office assumed the role of lead agent, while the "inspiration" to develop CBO standards emanated from the state department of education:

> The Governor's Office for Early Childhood is the lead agency for the Birth–4 work group. The creation of this initiative within the executive branch was inspired by the Kentucky Department of Education convening a work group to discuss developing standards and benchmarks for children age four to five.

In Washington, DC, the Office of Early Childhood Development is located within the Office of the Mayor. Hence, staff members in the Mayor's Office were responsible for both incepting and facilitating the process. Specifically, a respondent from the Office of Early Childhood Development reported:

> The process was started as a result of the Mayor's designation of the Office of Early Childhood Development as the lead agency to develop appropriate standards and materials to ensure that children enter school ready to learn.

*Partners in Developing CBO Standards*

Data revealed that a wide variety of individuals and agencies were involved in the standards development process. These individuals or groups were reported as "partnering" with the state's lead agent or agency.

Table V-4

*Partners in Developing Standards*

| State | Local School Districts | Dept. of Social Services/ Human Services | Dept. of Special Ed. | Higher Education | Parents | External Consultants | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Arizona | | | | X | X | | Family literacy |
| Delaware | | | | | | X | |
| Hawaii | X | | | X | | | Business statewide partnership |
| Indiana | X | X | X | X | X | | |
| Kentucky | X | | | X | | | |
| Nevada | X | | | | | X | |
| North Carolina | X | | X | X | | | |
| Oregon | | | X | | | | |
| Tennessee | X | | | | | | Even Start |
| Virginia | X | | | X | | | |
| Washington, DC | X | | | X | X | | |
| Wisconsin | | | | | | | Information not reported |

| State | Local School Districts | Dept. of Social Services/ Human Services | Dept. of Special Ed. | Higher Education | Parents | External Consultants | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wyoming | | Dept. of Health; Dept. of Family Services | | | | | |
| Total | 8 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 3 | 2 | |

As shown in Table V-4, the process of developing CBO standards tended to be highly participatory, involving partners both inside and outside the early childhood community. Similar to states with developed CBO standards, lead agents of in-process states tended to seek partners representing a broad spectrum of stakeholders. Arizona reported:

> It was critically important that the team be diverse—geographically and programmatically—as it was hoped that the process would not only strengthen but also help to de-fragmentize the early childhood community.

Respondents reported that representatives from the early childhood community typically included administrators and practitioners from Head Start, public and private preschools, child care, and representatives from states' AEYCs. In addition, as shown in Table V-4, participation also included the involvement of state departments (other than state departments of education), including departments of social services, departments of human services, and departments of special education. In addition, data revealed the participation of local school districts, higher education, and parents.

In this group of in-process states, local school districts were cited as important partners in the standards development process. As shown in Table V-4, 7 of the 13 states, including Washington, DC, reported local school districts as active participants in the process of developing and reviewing draft documents of the states' child-based outcome standards. In view of the link between early learning standards and K–12, this finding is not surprising.

Finally, as discussed earlier, most of the states reported building on existing K–12 initiatives to better prepare their states' preschool children to meet the K–12 standards.

*Funding CBO Standards Development in the In-Process States*

Similar to states that have developed CBO standards, as demonstrated in Table V-5, a variety of funding sources were used to develop states' CBO standards, including federal funds, state dollars, and private dollars. Seven of the 12 states plus Washington, DC reported funding from state agencies and departments, in particular state departments of education. As noted in the prior section, although respondents reported the use of "state dollars," these dollars may in fact overlap with federal dollars, including Title 1 and Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) funds. North Carolina expected to receive funding from the state, in addition to Title I money for this process.

Table V-5

*Funding Sources for In-Process States*

| State | Federal: CCDBG | Federal: IDEA | Federal: Other | State | Private | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Arizona | | | Even Start | X | | |
| Delaware | | | Spec. Ed. | | | |
| Hawaii | | | | | | School Readiness Task Force volunteering time |
| Indiana | | | Spec. Ed. | X | X | |
| Kentucky | | | | X | | |
| Nevada | | | | | | DOE staff volunteering time |
| North Carolina | | | Title I | X | | |
| Oregon | | | | X | | |
| Tennessee | | | | | | DOE staff volunteering time |
| Virginia | | | | X | | State Pre-School Initiative |
| Washington, DC | | | X | | | Office of Early Childhood Development |
| Wisconsin | | | | | X | |
| Wyoming | | | | X | | Telecommunications network |
| Total | 0 | 0 | 4 | 7 | 2 | |

Respondents in Hawaii, Nevada, and Tennessee reported that no specific money was earmarked for their states to develop CBO standards. Respondents in these states reported that individuals involved in the process of defining and developing CBO standards were doing so as part of their job responsibilities. Participating in this process was viewed as something extra, yet something they wanted to do. Specifically, a respondent from Tennessee reported:

> There is no direct funding for this effort. The early childhood community is very committed to this effort, and everyone is giving of their own time.

In addition, a respondent from Hawaii reported:

> There is no early childhood outcomes "initiative" at this time. The School Readiness Task Force and sub-committee are comprised of volunteers from the represented agencies and organizations.

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Wyoming reported that its state department of education had not earmarked funds to develop CBO standards; however, the state department of education paid for some of the follow-up conference costs:

> No funds were earmarked to develop the early learning standards. People participated in this initiative through WEN (Wyoming Equality Network), a telecommunication network linking all public high schools throughout the state. The video processing is free, and the main site is at the department of education. Through this process we were able to link up groups of people throughout the state.

Data revealed that in-process states received the preponderance of their funding to develop CBO standards from state departments of education. It is interesting to note, however, that the process of defining and developing CBO standards often depended on the good will of state-level staff, in addition to other members of the early childhood community—both individuals and organizations.

*Status of States Not In Process*

As shown in Table III-1 of the study, 11 states (Alabama, Alaska, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, North Dakota, South Dakota, and West Virginia) are categorized as not having CBO standards and not currently engaged in the process of developing CBO standards. Data from respondents revealed a variety of reasons for not having CBO standards or being in the process of developing them, with the range including practical, political, and philosophical rationales. Data also indicated that, while not involved in the CBO standards development process, these states did have a variety of early childhood initiatives underway. This is important, given the data from states with CBO standards that indicate pre-existing early childhood initiatives often laid the groundwork for the standards development process. The following vignettes illustrate the reasons these states have not engaged in the CBO standards development process and the kinds of early childhood initiatives in which these states are currently involved.

*Factors That Might Influence States That Have Not Begun a CBO Standards Development Process*

In an effort to discern what factors might have influenced states that have not begun a CBO standards development process, the research team studied the responses to the question about whether any CBO activities had been initiated in an attempt to extract themes that might account for the absence of CBO standards development activities. Three primary themes emerged: practical reasons for not having begun a CBO standards process, political reasons, and philosophical reasons.

*Practical reasons.* Several states without standards indicated that they are indeed doing work in the standards area but at the time of the interview had not gotten very far in the process. Others focused on a different kind of standards, most notably program standards. Both groups indicated that these foci were prerequisites to developing child-based outcome standards. For example, Alabama reported that in spite of its "fragmented system," it has taken some steps toward articulating a definition of early learning standards:

> [T]he articulation of a state definition of early learning standards is still in process. There is still not a concerted, organized effort where all departments have a single, simple definition for standards for all children. State subsidized childcare is handled by the Department of Human Resources. The Department of Education handles kindergarten. Then we have a separate department for children's affairs. We have three separate streams although they are all talking to each other.

Data in the survey revealed that six of the 11 states reporting no CBO standards (Alaska, Iowa, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, and West Virginia) indicated an interest in and process for developing

program standards. For example, Alaska reported that it is currently exploring ways to define and develop preschool program standards. Respondents reported that the state has not begun the process of developing CBO standards from birth through preschool; however, there are standards for school-age children, in addition to kindergarteners:

> The Department of Education and Early Development in Alaska has developed the Kindergarten Developmental Profile to assess how "prepared" children are once they have entered kindergarten. In the conception and design of the Kindergarten Developmental Profile, both Even Start indicators and Head Start child outcomes were considered.

Kansas reported having developed program and readiness standards but not CBO standards:

> Kansas has an early childhood readiness task force that started two years ago. As a group, we have defined standards in relation to the community, school, family, and child by looking at indicators of conditions of readiness such as poverty level, health, parenting, and opportunities for children, etc. We have prepared a definition of readiness and the guiding principles tie to our program standards called "Early Childhood Quality Standards."

Data revealed that three states (Nebraska, North Dakota, and West Virginia) reported an interest in implementing Head Start's Performance Standards at the state level. North Dakota reported:

> North Dakota's Head Start Collaboration has assumed responsibility in developing preschool measures and is currently working with the state's Head Start Association. Our next step is to develop measures for children from birth through age three.

West Virginia has been focusing on developing program standards for four-year-olds in addition to implementing Head Start's Performance Standards:

> [N]ew legislation...mandates program standards for four-year-olds....The new standards will be for curriculum, preparing students, attendance, and personnel.

Finally, some states have placed their priorities for their efforts elsewhere. A respondent from Montana reported that the state is currently working on its accreditation system through a tiered-reimbursement system for child care providers serving state subsidized children. Perhaps these states will at some point begin working on CBO standards, but for now, their energy seems focused on other elements of promoting quality early childhood programming and instruction.

*Political reasons.* Some states offer sound political reasons for not becoming engaged in the development of CBO standards. In these states, most often strong local control prevails, and there is strong sentiment against state intrusion into local affairs generally. The lack of CBO standards may be a manifestation of that commitment to local control. Iowa, North Dakota, and South Dakota are good examples of this. A respondent from Iowa reported:

> Iowa is historically a state that has strong local control. I do not think we will ever have mandated statewide early learning and developmental standards for children. In Iowa, we do have program accreditation standards and requirements for teachers' certification program standards..."outcomes" cannot be mandated for state-funded early childhood programs....[They]would have to be voluntary.

And from North Dakota:

> As North Dakota is a county and locally driven state, any effort to define early learning standards will probably have to come from our early childhood advocates at the grass roots level. If, however, advocates came to the governor requesting that the state begin to explore this issue, then perhaps the early childhood community would respond favorably to a "top-down" initiative.

Similarly, South Dakota attributes its lack of state-level CBO standards to the fact that it is a locally controlled state:

> There is a group of us that have been meeting informally to discuss early childhood issues, and in particular preschool for all of South Dakota's children. We have talked a little about the standards issue but are currently looking at a universal preschool for everyone and are trying to come up with a position statement. In South Dakota, we have no mandatory attendance, even until first grade. Some schools have a Title I preschool.... We are a local controlled state.

Clearly the political climate and degree of local control within a state can impact the state's decision whether or not to pursue the development of CBO standards.

*Philosophical reasons*. Some states are against standards for deep-seated philosophical reasons related to the potential negative consequences that standards might evoke. With respect to the philosophical disposition of some states, Nebraska reported:

> We have no right to measure child outcomes until the proper systems supports are in place. The state has no plans to go beyond where we are. We continue to invite people to look at Head Start's performance standards and invite others to look at good assessment tools.

A respondent from Idaho reported that at one time a task force was convened to look at developing preschool standards, but the results were "inconclusive." At the time of the interview, Idaho's Department of Education was working on school-age state standards for K–12, but not for preschool.

A respondent in New Hampshire reported, "the State of New Hampshire is not currently involved in defining early learning." In addition, the respondent stated:

> Our public schools don't seem to recognize the role that social and emotional development plays in learning and reading readiness (three to five years of age).

### *Observations Regarding States Without CBO Standards*

Data revealed that the standards development process for in-process states in many ways mirrored the process for states with published standards. For example, as shown in Table V-1, a preponderance of in-process states reported the dual function of state departments of education—as both inceptors and lead agents in the development of state-level CBO standards. In addition, similar to states with standards, most in-process states reported a highly inclusive standards development process with a variety of stakeholders represented in the effort, including early childhood, higher education, and the K–12 community. State-level committees were assembled to develop the standards and focus groups to collect input from the various stakeholders. In sum, states categorized

as furthest along in developing CBO standards tended to report a similar process to those states classified with published CBO standards.

States classified as having no standards, however, present an equally interesting story. Although these states are not currently involved in developing CBO standards, they are involved in a variety of other early childhood initiatives and activities. Given their focus on other early childhood initiatives and their tendency toward local control, the process of developing CBO standards may or may not be on the horizon for them. One factor—the *Good Start, Grow Smart* requirement that states develop voluntary early learning guidelines for child care providers—could perhaps lead these states to begin a CBO standards development process in the near future.

## SECTION VI: IMPLEMENTATION OF AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR CHILD-BASED OUTCOME STANDARDS

Once the standards are developed and adopted, to have value for children, they must be implemented. The distance between development of standards and their actual use in programs is often a long, arduous road. Such is certainly the case with the implementation of the CBO standards. As noted, CBO standards vary tremendously in terms of the nature of the standards, the different ages of children to whom they apply, and the process by which they were developed. The implementation or use of the CBO standards is no less diverse. Nonetheless, examining how CBO standards are used is critical to understanding how standards are being manifest in the early care and education field.

In organizing this chapter, we have elected to focus on several themes, all related to different aspects of implementation and use of the standards. Implementation is a multi-faceted process that takes into consideration whether or not the states require adherence to the standards and who is and is not required to implement them. It also relates to the stated or intended purposes of the standards, and how people become acquainted with and are prepared for the implementation of the standards. Finally, we also examine how programs are being held accountable for using the CBO standards. This chapter is therefore organized by the following themes: where and how CBO standards are intended to be used, the support that is provided to promote the use of the CBO standards, and the extent to which and how programs are held accountable for using the CBO standards.

### *Where and How the CBO Standards Are Intended to Be Used*

The survey asked respondents to indicate where the CBO standards were intended to be used and the intended purpose for which the CBO standards were designed to be used. Data indicate that states have developed the CBO standards to be used primarily in publicly funded preschool programs, but they hope they will be used in other programs and for a wide variety of purposes.

#### *Programs Targeted With CBO Standards*

One of the first and most significant questions about the implementation of the standards is, "Where were the standards designed to be used?" As shown in Table VI-1, the answer clearly is that the standards have been developed for state-funded pre-kindergarten programs. Looking at both survey responses and the actual standards document for information about which programs were targeted, the research team determined that 22 of the 29 sets of standards were for the states' publicly-funded early care and education programs, which in most cases are the states' publicly funded pre-kindergarten programs (typically located, at least in part, in public schools) or school readiness programs. This finding is consistent with the earlier finding that the state departments of education were typically the lead agency in developing the standards. In fact, of the 22 standards developed for state-funded preschool programs, the state departments of education were the lead agency for 17. In these cases, the state education agencies developed the CBO standards for the pre-kindergarten programs that they administer.

Table VI-1

*Programs Targeted With CBO Standards*

| State | Primary Target Program |
|---|---|
| Arkansas | State-funded pre-kindergarten programs |
| California | All state-subsidized child care programs |

| State | Primary Target Program |
|---|---|
| Colorado | Adult education and Even Start programs required; other state-funded early childhood programs expected to use them |
| Connecticut | Early childhood programs across the state |
| Florida | State-funded preschool programs |
| Georgia | State-funded Office of School Readiness programs |
| Illinois | State-funded preschool programs |
| Louisiana | Public school pre-kindergarten programs |
| Maine | Each regional child development site that implements IDEA for children ages 0–5 |
| Maryland | Public school pre-kindergarten programs |
| Massachusetts<br>Learning Results<br>Early Learning Results | School-based pre-kindergarten programs<br>All state-funded preschools or preschools participating in the state preschool program—Community Partnership for Children |
| Michigan | State-funded Michigan School Readiness Program |
| Minnesota | Available to all early childhood programs in the state |
| Mississippi | Public pre-K funded with Title I funds |
| Missouri | Available to any early childhood care and education program in the state |
| New Jersey | Pre-kindergarten programs in Abbott districts |
| New Mexico | State-funded pre-kindergarten programs |
| New York | Public school pre-kindergarten programs |
| Ohio | State-funded preschool programs |
| Oklahoma | State-funded pre-kindergarten programs |
| Pennsylvania | School-based pre-kindergarten programs |
| Rhode Island | Early childhood programs across the state |
| South Carolina | All school-based programs serving children ages 3–5 |
| Texas | School-based pre-kindergarten programs |
| Utah | Early childhood programs and parents across the state |
| Vermont | School-based pre-kindergarten programs |
| Washington<br>ECEAP<br>OSPI | ECEAP early childhood programs<br>Preschool programs within the state |

There were a few exceptions to the general pattern of the standards being developed for state-funded early care and education programs. Respondents from Colorado report that their state's family literacy and Even Start programs were the target programs for the CBO standards. Colorado, however, expects that the CBO standards will be used in other state-funded early childhood programs. Connecticut, Minnesota, Missouri, Rhode Island, Utah, and Washington—OSPI have broader target audiences for their standards. They report that the standards were developed for use in all early childhood programs across the state, including state-funded pre-kindergarten, private child cares programs, Head Start programs, and family child care homes, as well as parents in several cases. The intention in these states was to create a document that would be applicable in a wide array of settings, rather than one particular program.

As noted in Section III, four states have standards that are applicable for infants and toddlers: California, Maine—Early Learning Results, New Mexico, and Washington—OSPI. In each of these states, the infant-toddler CBO standards are part of a continuum that covers birth through age five (or in the case of California, age 14). The pattern of the CBO standards being targeted at publicly funded programs is evident for this age range as well. In California, the CBO standards are applicable for publicly funded child care programs serving infants and toddlers (as well as older

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children). In Maine, the Early Learning Results were developed for publicly funded programs providing special education services, and in New Mexico and Washington, the standards are also applicable to publicly funded programs serving infants and toddlers, as well as preschool-age children.

While only six states report that their standards were developed with the intention of having them used in early childhood programs across the state, the majority of states that developed standards for particular pre-kindergarten programs report that they hope the CBO standards will be used by other programs. States that developed the standards for particular programs typically planned to make their CBO standards available to other programs and early care and education settings. Respondents often mentioned that the standards were also disseminated to other settings, that training was provided for other programs, and that they hoped that teachers in settings outside of the publicly funded pre-kindergarten programs would use them.

One respondent from Ohio notes,

> It is essential that all of our state-funded programs receive this information. The majority of children, however, are not within state-funded programs, but private preschool and family childcare. We need to get information out to these folks as well.

Respondents consistently echoed a theme that indicated their states were, at minimum, making the standards available to Head Start, private, for-profit and non-profit, family child care, and other programs within the state. In some cases, such as Louisiana and Missouri, training and other resources, such as guidebooks, are also provided for programs other than the publicly funded pre-kindergarten programs.

A few states (Georgia, Maine, Maryland, New York, and South Carolina) did not mention an intention to have the standards used in other programs. It should be noted, however, that the interview protocol simply asked where the standards were used and did not explicitly ask if the standards were available in other settings, so respondents may not have thought to provide that information.

*How the CBO Standards Are Intended to Be Used*

The intended purposes of the CBO standards refer to the goals that the state hopes to achieve or how the state plans for the CBO standards to be used. The intended purposes, as reported by the participants and noted in the introduction sections of the standards documents, broke down into four broad, and somewhat overlapping, categories: (1) informing curriculum and instruction, (2) improving program quality, (3) improving children's school readiness, and (4) providing a basis for instructional assessment (Table VI-2). A few words about the categories are in order. First, states often offered multiple purposes, and in some cases, the survey respondent may have emphasized particular purposes while the actual standards document discussed the same or other purposes. Second, references to intentions to improve student's performance in the K–12 educational system are included in the school readiness category. Finally, a particular purpose had to be mentioned by at least two states to be created. There may have been other purposes mentioned by only one state that are not reflected in the table.

Table VI-2

*Intended Purposes of CBO Standards*

| State | Intended Purposes | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Inform Curriculum & Instruction | Improve Program Quality | Improve School Readiness | Provide a Basis for Instructional Assessments |
| Arkansas | X | X | X | X |
| California | X | X | X | X |
| Colorado | X | | X | |
| Connecticut | X | X | | |
| Florida | X | | X | |
| Georgia | X | X | | |
| Illinois | X | | | |
| Louisiana | X | X | | X |
| Maine<br>Learning Results<br>Early Learning Results | X<br>X | | X | X |
| Maryland | X | | | |
| Massachusetts | X | X | | |
| Michigan | X | X | X | |
| Minnesota | X | | | X |
| Mississippi | X | | | |
| Missouri | X | | X | X |
| New Jersey | X | X | X | |
| New Mexico | X | | | X |
| New York | X | | X | |
| Ohio | X | X | | |
| Oklahoma | X | | | X |
| Pennsylvania | X | | X | X |
| Rhode Island | X | X | X | X |
| S. Carolina | X | | | X |
| Texas | X | | X | |
| Utah | X | | | |
| Vermont | X | | | X |
| Washington<br>ECEAP<br>OSPI | X<br>X | X | X | X<br>X |
| Total | 29 | 11 | 13 | 14 |

*Inform Curriculum and Instruction*

Each of the 27 states indicated that at least one of the intended purposes of the CBO standards was to inform curriculum and instruction. The intention, in these cases, is that teachers would use the standards as a guide for planning curriculum—that teachers would plan activities and experiences to address the skills and characteristics included in the standards. A quote from the Washington—OSPI document entitled *A Framework for Achieving the Essential Academic Learning Requirements in Reading Writing Communication Birth to 5 Years* illustrates how one state articulated this purpose of improving instruction:

> This document is designed to assist early care and education providers in planning and implementing early learning opportunities that will help prepare young children for later success in meeting the essential academic learning requirements in reading,

> writing, and communication....The frameworks are intended to guide you [teachers and others] as you develop curriculum and activities for the children in your care. The focus is on being intentional as you provide early experiences—in school, the community, or at home—that lay the foundation for success as children encounter our state's public school curriculum.

Notes one respondent from Connecticut:

> These are curriculum embedded benchmarks, and we would hope that the user would recognize where children are in their learning and development and adjust curricula to further help children along. The standards help teachers to see if their individual curriculum is supporting the standards.... This work is not meant to be exclusionary, or to measure progress of teachers, but to keep teachers informed so as to adjust their instructional design and curriculum.

Another from Louisiana noted:

> The standards are used as a resource and guide for pre-K teachers for designing curricula and lesson plans and for program standards. There will be a coding system on all pre-K lesson plans that corresponds to the standards. School principals and directors must keep a record of the lesson plans, and state supervisors and superintendents will use this coding system to determine that the standards were used as a guide when the lesson plans were prepared and that teachers are "teaching from the standards."

As noted in Section III, some states went further in their efforts to influence curriculum and instruction. In addition to articulating CBO standards, these states provided examples of activities and instructional strategies that support the particular CBO standard. For example, Arkansas provides a two-column chart, with the developmental benchmark listed in the first column and teaching strategies to support the benchmark described in the second column. Likewise, Mississippi provides "suggested teaching strategies" for its benchmarks and also provides guidance on informal assessment related to the benchmarks. Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, and New York also provide suggested teaching strategies for each CBO standard. While states have varied in how explicitly they have linked CBO standards to curriculum and instruction, it clearly is an important intended purpose for each of the documents.

*Improve Program Quality*

Many of the respondents and the CBO standards documents indicated that one intended purpose of the CBO standards was to improve the overall quality of early childhood programs. Closely aligned with the reported purpose of improving curriculum and instruction, respondents who mentioned this purpose were describing a broader purpose of improving the quality of programs overall, above and beyond the instruction that takes place within classrooms. In most instances, this purpose was reflected in a general statement about the importance of improving overall program quality or the mention of the importance of the CBO standards for making programmatic decisions based on how well teachers were using the CBO standards and children were progressing on the indicators. Respondents may have had in mind an objective of enhancing training for teachers, increasing the level of professionalism among programs, and/or using the standards as a tool to provide indications of overall quality of the programs. For example, both California and Michigan reported plans to use their states CBO standards for teacher training and professional development. Massachusetts states that the CBO standards "are to assist programs in self-evaluation." For 11 of the 29 sets of standards, either the survey respondents or information included in the CBO standards documents indicated that one of their purposes for the CBO standards was to improve overall program quality.

*Improve School Readiness*

For 13 of the CBO standards, a stated purpose was to improve children's readiness for school or to increase the likelihood that children will have opportunities to learn skills that are important for later success in school before they start kindergarten. While it is possible that, like improving curriculum and instruction, this purpose was an intention of all states, the purpose was explicitly noted for only 13 of the sets of standards.

Missouri's CBO standards document states:

> The standards are broad descriptions of what most children should know and be able to do by the time they enter kindergarten…resulting in all children entering school ready to succeed.

The CBO standards of Colorado, Pennsylvania, Texas, and New Jersey indicate that one purpose of the CBO standards is to further align the pre-kindergarten curriculum with the K–12 standards and, therefore, improve children's readiness for school. This is illustrated in the following quote from the New Jersey CBO standards document: "These expectations/standards will support and prepare young children to meet New Jersey's Core Curriculum Content Standards." Pennsylvania's CBO standards are to "provide continuity and prepare young students to reach the Pennsylvania Academic Standards…by the end of third grade."

*Guide Instructional Assessment*

In 13 states, one of the intended purposes of the CBO standards was to support or provide guidance for instructional assessments that are conducted at the classroom level. Respondents in the states often stated that the articulation of child outcomes in the CBO standards would hopefully guide teachers in the skills and characteristics they choose to assess in their classrooms. While no state has indicated that CBO standards are to be used in decisions about children's placement or enrollment in kindergarten, many states do hope that teachers will use the CBO standards as a basis for informal assessments that can guide their curriculum planning. States do, however, vary in the degree to which this expectation is formalized and the amount of support they provide for teachers in using the CBO standards to guide instructional assessments.

In California, Maine—Early Learning Results, New Mexico, and Washington—ECEAP, the CBO standards are actually part of an assessment system. These states most formally and explicitly require that the CBO standards be used for assessment. In these cases, teachers are expected to collect assessment data on children's progress toward the CBO standards and then to use the data to inform their instructional practices. The curriculum should be individualized to support children in their development based on the results of the assessment. Data from teacher assessments in these states are also reported and aggregated at the program level (see the section on accountability for further information).

Other states have taken a more indirect route to supporting classroom instruction through the CBO standards. Minnesota's CBO standards document states that one purpose of the document is to "provide a direction for authentic assessment of young children. The indicators can be used to help teachers and caregivers define the kinds of things they want young children to do and know. Once those are articulated, teachers and caregivers next need to consider how to collect evidence of children's learning in appropriate ways." The document then goes on to describe principles and examples of authentic assessment. Missouri, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Vermont, and Washington—OSPI also intend for the CBO standards to guide classroom assessments. A respondent from Louisiana notes:

> [I]n terms of individual assessment, it has not been mandated how the parishes will use the standards to aid in children's assessment. Some may use a simple checklist, others may use a more elaborate, tiered-system of "not yet mastered," "mastery," or "approaching mastery" when assessing children's development and acquisition of the skills outlined in the standards.

While the mechanics of how CBO standards support classroom instruction have not been specified in these states, the general idea is that once the CBO standards define characteristics, knowledge, and abilities that are important, teachers will choose to assess children based on the defined characteristics outlined in the CBO standards.

Two states have provided resources within the CBO standards document specifically to support classroom assessment. Arkansas has created a developmental rating scale to accompany its Early Childhood Education Framework (its CBO standards). The document states that the rating scale is to be used by teachers as a practical way of documenting each child's development, a tool to develop a "complete picture of individual children in order to plan a program," and a strategy to document children's skills and behaviors so the information can be shared with support staff and parents. The document states that the rating scale is *not* intended as a means of comparing one child's program with another or assessing children's readiness to enter kindergarten. Furthermore, the document stresses that informal teacher observations are the preferred method for collecting data related to the Early Childhood Education Framework. Mississippi's CBO standards document provides guidance on how teachers might assess specific CBO standards. CBO standards that a teacher should be able to observe naturally throughout the day and record with anecdotal records are noted. For other CBO standards, the document suggests that informal assessments may be more appropriate to gauge where a child is relative to the specific indicator. In these cases, the CBO standards document provides guiding questions for the teacher to think about as she is assessing a child, as well as suggested tasks that might be used to determine whether a child has mastered the specific skill described in the CBO standards.

*Non-Purposes or What CBO Standards Were Not Developed For*

In addition to articulating the intended purpose for the CBO standards, several CBO standards documents specified the purposes for which the documents were not intended. Typically, these "non-purposes" related to decisions about child placements and/or use as a curriculum. The Washington—OSPI document states, "These learning frameworks are not intended for use as a group of individual screening tools to place children in programs or to make determinations of readiness for school. They are not intended to be used as an assessment checklist nor as an evaluation tool to make high-stakes decisions about children's program placements." Rhode Island CBO standards state that the document "SHOULD NOT be used to: assess the competence of young children; mandate specific teaching practices or materials; determine rewards or penalties for educational personnel; prohibit children from entering kindergarten; or exclude groups of children because of disabilities or home language."

The intention that the CBO standards not be used as a curriculum was evident in Florida's statement: "The standards should be used only as a guide and not an absolute for all children…The standards are not a curriculum in and of themselves; rather they can be used to guide decisions about curriculum, materials, and the classroom environment." Missouri and New Jersey echo these sentiments and suggest strongly that the CBO standards developed in their states not be used as a curriculum. States seem to have attempted to define the intended purposes and non-purposes of their CBO standards.

Support for Implementation of CBO Standards

### *Dissemination of CBO Standards*

Once developed, the standards need to be disseminated. Dissemination issues include determining (a) the method of dissemination, (b) what agency is responsible for dissemination and for bearing the cost, (c) and to whom the CBO standards will be disseminated.

#### *Dissemination Methods*

Every state with CBO standards has compiled them into a printed document, and several methods were employed to inform providers and the public about the existence and content of these documents. The most popular form of dissemination was through the mail, usually to any program, provider, or individual who requested a copy (See Table VI-3). Colorado, however, would only provide a copy of its CBO standards document to individuals after they had received training on how to use the standards. By limiting dissemination of the CBO standards, Colorado intended to ensure that individuals using the CBO standards have received training that is relatively consistent across the state. This strategy is designed to maximize the likelihood that the CBO standards will be fully understood and implemented appropriately by persons using them.

Standards were distributed to providers through a systematic, mass mailing by seven states: Connecticut, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, South Carolina, and Texas. Connecticut mailed 10,000 documents to programs throughout the state and printed an additional 5,000 documents. Michigan mailed copies of its CBO standards to over 1,000 preschools and additional elementary schools. Typically, states expected that, after their initial mass mailings, programs would make and distribute their own copies to teachers, staff, administrators, parents, and any other individual who wished to have a copy. All six states indicated that they would mail single copies of the standards upon request; none, however, planned a second major distribution.

More "non-traditional" methods of disseminating the CBO standards include providing downloadable versions of the CBO standards on a website (19 states), developing a video demonstrating the CBO standards (California, Illinois, Mississippi, Utah), preparing "toolkits" or guidebooks on the CBO standards (Missouri, Pennsylvania), and producing informational posters (Missouri). Connecticut has established demonstration classrooms in lab schools where the CBO standards are modeled.

Table VI-3

*Dissemination Strategies for CBO Standards*

| State | Mass Mailing | Mail by Request | Posted on the Web | Video |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Arkansas | | X | | |
| California | | X | X | X |
| Colorado | | | X | |
| Connecticut | X | X | | |
| Florida | | X | X | |
| Georgia | | X | X | |
| Illinois | | X | X | X |
| Louisiana | X | X | X | |
| Maine | | X | | |
| Maryland | | X | | |
| Massachusetts<br>Learning Results<br>Early Learning Results | | <br>X<br>X | | |
| Michigan | X | X | | |
| Minnesota | X | X | X | |
| Mississippi | | X | X | X |
| Missouri | X | X | X | |
| New Jersey | | X | X | |
| New Mexico | | X | | |
| New York | | X | X | |
| Ohio | | X | X | |
| Oklahoma | | X | X | |
| Pennsylvania | | | X | |
| Rhode Island | | X | | |
| South Carolina | X | X | X | |
| Texas | X | X | X | |
| Utah | | X | X | X |
| Vermont | | X | | |
| Washington<br>ECEAP<br>OSPI | | <br>X<br>X | <br>X<br>X | |
| Total | 7 | 27 | 19 | 4 |

*Agencies Responsible for Dissemination of the CBO Standards*

In all of the states, the state agency that took the lead in developing the CBO standards was also the agency responsible for their distribution. As noted in previous sections, this is typically the state's department of education. The funding for the printing and distribution of the CBO standards, however, was sometimes supplemented by money from other agencies or programs—for example, Missouri and Mississippi both used Head Start collaboration funds in conjunction with the funds supplied by the state department of education. See Appendix D for a complete listing of the CBO standards and information that can be used to obtain copies of the CBO standards.

*Who Gets the CBO Standards*

There was a prevalent attitude among the states to make the CBO standards available to as many programs and individuals as possible. This is consistent with the data reported above on the intended audience for the standards. Even in states with a specific program for which the CBO standards were designed wanted their CBO standards to be used in a wide variety of settings. Dissemination strategies seem to have been consistent with this desire to have other programs use the CBO standards. In addition to disseminating the CBO standards within the programs where their use is required, states reported sharing the document with a wide variety of programs and individuals, including Head Start, private child care programs, and family child care settings. States that developed their CBO standards for the general early care and education systems in their states (rather than for specific programs) also reported widely disseminating the CBO standards documents. For example, Connecticut, Minnesota, and Missouri each undertook mass mailings to disseminate their CBO standards to providers across the state. States have also elected to post their CBO standards on the Internet to make them available to a wide audience in a cost-efficient way—18 out of the 29 sets of standards are reportedly available on the Web.

### *Supports Available to Promote the Use of CBO Standards*

Another critical element in the implementation process is ensuring that people working with young children are trained both on the content of the CBO standards and how to use them. States have devised a variety of strategies to provide support for programs as they use the CBO standards. Training involves an introduction to the CBO standards and guidance on how to implement them. Training is critical if the CBO standards are to be effective. Technical assistance, on the other hand, often takes place after initial training has occurred. Technical assistance refers to having the ongoing support of an individual or agency that is an expert on the CBO standards available to answer questions or to help problem-solve once the CBO standards have been implemented to ensure that implementation stays "on track."

#### *Training*

In addition to making the document available through the avenues described above, each of the states reported that some type of training is available to explain the CBO standards or give guidance on how they are used. The training opportunities varied, but the most frequently described strategies were to provide information on the CBO standards through conferences and workshops, incorporating CBO standards into teacher preparation programs in institutions of higher education, and training trainers to work with programs. What follows is a description of some of the training opportunities described by respondents when asked, "How do persons (teachers, administrators, parents) know about the early learning standards?"

#### *Conferences and Workshops*

A number of states described either holding conferences related to the CBO standards or providing sessions on the CBO standards as part of other early childhood conferences in their states. California hosts an annual conference to provide training to service providers using the Desired Results system and has also presented on the CBO standards at numerous other conferences within the state. They have used the four-year development process to inform providers about the CBO standards and gain feedback along the way. Colorado held a statewide "kick-off" conference to introduce the CBO standards to approximately 1,000 early childhood educators. Following the kick off conference, a series of "train the trainer" sessions have been held to build a network of trainers who can deliver training on the CBO standards at the local level. Service providers must attend one of the trainings offered by a trained trainer to receive a copy of the document.

In Connecticut, the Bureau of Early Childhood Education models the CBO standards in workshops and seminars for different constituencies. Minnesota provides 12 one-day regional workshops

throughout the year on the CBO standards, reaching approximately 1,000 early childhood staff. Likewise, Mississippi provides frequent trainings and workshops on the CBO standards. Both New Jersey and Ohio report that training on how to use or implement CBO standards is incorporated into regular professional development opportunities provided throughout the year.

Other states report providing training on CBO standards as a part of broader conferences or meetings. Georgia provides annual training for Office of School Readiness providers, including information on the CBO standards. South Carolina reports holding four early childhood conferences per year and an annual meeting for principals. The CBO standards are incorporated into these training opportunities. Missouri provides training on its CBO standards at the annual Missouri Association for the Education of Young Children conference. States are making training available on the CBO standards both through stand-alone training opportunities and by incorporating training on the CBO standards into other early childhood professional training events.

*Institutions of Higher Education*

A number of states have enlisted the help of institutions of higher education to provide pre-service training on the CBO standards as part of their teacher preparation. Arkansas, Connecticut, Michigan, and New Jersey mentioned that teacher education programs in their states are incorporating the CBO standards into their courses to promote understanding of the CBO standards. In Arkansas, early childhood education students at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville study the CBO standards as part of their teacher preparation courses. In Connecticut and Michigan, preschool education programs in the college and university system use the CBO standards as part of their courses. States have made efforts to infuse their CBO standards into teacher preparation programs as a means of reaching a wider audience.

*Train the Trainers*

Arkansas, Colorado, and Pennsylvania have used a "train the trainer" model to provide support for their CBO standards. Individuals receive training on the CBO standards and then are expected to train local program staff. In Colorado, the CBO standards are only disseminated to programs and individuals who have completed training led by one of its team of trainers.

*Technical Assistance*

Ongoing technical assistance was provided by a number of the states. The methods of technical assistance most commonly reported were phone support by the department that developed the CBO standards and mentor teachers. State specialists receive phone calls from programs and individuals with specific questions about the CBO standards and provide quite specific assistance in this manner.

Rhode Island has established a system of mentors to assist programs in using the CBO standards. In Rhode Island, Resource and Referral centers train mentor teachers to provide support and professional development to teachers in the pilot programs that are using the CBO standards. New Mexico also utilizes the state's Resource and Referral agencies to provide training on the CBO standards, although the training is provided directly to program staff rather than through mentor teachers.

Finally, Florida schedules three technical assistance forums per year (that include CBO standards and other issues) and posts technical assistance papers on its website for programs to access. States have developed a variety of mechanisms for providing technical assistance to support programs in utilizing the CBO standards.

## Expectations That CBO Standards Will Be Used and the Degree to Which Programs Are Held Accountable for CBO Standards

### *Expectations for Use of CBO Standards*

Although much time and energy is invested in standards development, dissemination, and training, less is known about the expectations for use of the standards. The research team was also interested in learning whether programs were expected/required to use the CBO standards or whether the CBO standards were voluntary. To what extent and how are programs held accountable for using them? Culling data from both the interviews and the actual standards documents, we rated each state's CBO standards as either "expected" or "voluntary." Data indicated that the majority (21 of 29) of the state CBO standards were expected to be used in programs. Only eight—Connecticut, Minnesota, Missouri, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Texas, Utah, and Washington–OSPI—were rated as voluntary CBO standards.

Table VI-4

*Expectations for Use of CBO Standards*

| States With CBO Standards That Are Expected/Required to Be Used by Programs | States With Voluntary CBO Standards |
|---|---|
| Arkansas<br>California<br>Colorado<br>Florida<br>Georgia<br>Illinois<br>Louisiana<br>Maine<br>Maryland<br>Massachusetts<br>—Learning Results<br>—Early Learning Results<br>Michigan<br>Mississippi<br>New Jersey<br>New Mexico<br>New York<br>Ohio<br>Pennsylvania<br>South Carolina<br>Vermont<br>Washington—ECEAP | Connecticut<br>Minnesota<br>Missouri<br>Oklahoma<br>Rhode Island<br>Texas<br>Utah<br>Washington—OSPI |

*States Expecting That the CBO Standards Will Be Used in Programs*

The 20 states expecting or requiring that their CBO standards be used—Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts (Learning Results and Early Learning Results), Michigan, Mississippi, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Vermont, and Washington–ECEAP— are geographically diverse, east to west, north to south. The one common element is that in each of the states where the CBO standards were rated as "expected," the target program was a publicly funded program. No state has required that CBO standards be used in a program that is not publicly funded. Intuitively, this finding makes sense—states can only require standards be used in programs that they are funding.

*What does "expected" really mean?* Rating CBO standards as expected or voluntary is a deceptively simple dichotomy. Examining the expected CBO standards more closely reveals a great deal of variance in exactly what "expected" means. Words used to describe the expectation that certain programs use the CBO standards ranged from "mandated," to "required," to "suggested," to "expected." Expecting CBO standards to be used might mean that the state had provided training to all teachers within the targeted program or that use of the CBO standards was a stipulation of the program's funding. The degree of expectation tied to the CBO standards varies from state to state and, within states, can vary from program to program.

In four states where the CBO standards are part of assessment systems, the CBO standards will eventually be required as a stipulation of program funding. The accountability requirements are being phased in. California, for example, will require the use of the Desired Results CBO

standards/assessment system in all state-subsidized programs. As the state developed the system, programs were trained and encouraged to use the CBO standards. Beginning in July 2002, programs were required to use them to complete child assessments. New Mexico has similar expectations for state-funded programs. Notes a respondent from New Mexico, "Expectations come with funding. The staff in these programs is asked to use this system of observation and recording as part of their program." Programs using the Early Learning Results CBO standards in Maine will eventually be required to report the number of children who demonstrate the behaviors and characteristics that are described in the CBO standards. Washington—ECEAP CBO standards were developed as part of a program evaluation design. Programs are expected to use the CBO standards as a basis for their program activities and to demonstrate progress on the CBO standards indicators.

Other states have less stringent expectations that their standards will be used. Many respondents stated that the CBO standards are used within the target program and described efforts to ensure that the CBO standards are understood and used but stopped short of stating that programs were required to use the CBO standards. Michigan, for example, described its CBO standards as "recommended" and noted that the state is prohibited from implementing unfunded mandates and would, therefore, have to pay any costs associated with implementing the CBO standards if they were required.

In some states, there are differential requirements or different levels of expectations for different publicly funded programs. In New Jersey, for instance, the CBO standards are "required" in all 30 Abbott districts and are "encouraged" in other school districts. A respondent from Colorado notes that the state's CBO standards are required for family literacy and adult education programs. However, they "are not mandated [for other programs], but if various programs are not using them (in particular state funded programs), DOE needs to know why. Instead of being mandated, programs are asked to consider them."

In addition to the level of "expectation" associated with the CBO standards, states also vary in how they are implementing and monitoring the requirements that the CBO standards be used. California reported, "We are in the process of trying to rollout the standards and require the use of the instrument. This will need to be accomplished through regulations." At the time of our data collection, it seemed that a number of states plan to require that their CBO standards be used in the target programs, but there were few monitoring systems in place to determine whether the CBO standards were actually being used. Therefore, one might question whether CBO standards are actually required. Data from the interviews indicate, however, that states are thinking about how they will ensure that the CBO standards are used and that the monitoring of how CBO standards are used will be phased in over time.

*States Where Implementation is Not Required*

We noted above that in 21 of the 29 sets of CBO standards, the state expects that the CBO standards will be used in at least one program. But what about the remaining eight states? As with most elements of CBO standards, the answer varies from state to state.

This group of states tended to use the adjective "voluntary" to describe standards, although the intention is certainly that the CBO standards will be used. Missouri, for example, responded that "the standards are not required for any program but will be available to any early childhood care/education program, including parents, in the state," and its CBO standards document includes recommendations for educators, policymakers, the community, and families. Connecticut too has made its standards widely available within the state and seems to be counting on the usefulness of the document itself to encourage programs to actually use it. Programs conduct self-evaluations on components of the state's school readiness legislation, and the CBO standards support this process. Likewise, Minnesota has made its CBO standards widely available and has provided extensive training across the state. Minnesota's CBO standards document states, "[T]he Minnesota Department of Children, Families & Learning does not mandate its [the CBO standards] use in any prescribed way. Rather, it is meant to be a resource guide for family members, teachers and caregivers, community members, and policymakers to use in ways that are supportive of young children's development." In these three states, hopes that the voluntary CBO standards will be used seem to rest on including a wide range of stakeholders in the development process, targeting a wide range of early childhood programs, and developing ample resources to provide support and assistance in implementing the CBO standards.

Oklahoma indicated that its standards were developed as a response to teachers rather than a mandate; therefore, the CBO standards were not required. The respondent noted that the CBO standards are "voluntary guidelines and not state mandates." Furthermore,

> The Department of Education led this effort [to develop the CBO standards] and it was based on a need expressed by the teachers. We have a mandated curriculum for K–12. As pre-k grew, the teachers needed something.... No one had to adopt or endorse it or send it through the Department of Education for approval. We are interested in local school districts having choice.... They are intended to be used by state pre-k programs (public schools). They can be used by others, including Head Start and private child care.

Likewise, Rhode Island seemed to indicate that its standards would not be required but were developed as a response to a need within the field and, therefore, would be used by a wide range of programs.

Two states—Texas and Utah—indicated the voluntary nature of their CBO standards was related to the political and policy context within their states. Texas commented that since the requirement for standards is legislatively mandated only for K–12 (in fact, Texas law does not require a child to enter formal schooling until the age of six), pre-K standards could not, therefore, be required. Utah currently does not have a state-funded pre-kindergarten program. The Utah CBO standards document states that the CBO standards are "not a mandate, but a set of guidelines for parents and teachers who want more direction in working with three- and four-year-old children." The state is, however, looking to the future when a state-funded pre-kindergarten program might be possible and has developed "recommended" CBO standards as a foundation for future efforts to develop a pre-kindergarten curriculum. The CBO standards currently are a resource for any program within the state, and the Office of Education does not monitor programs to see if the guidelines are being implemented.

*Factors Impacting to Whom and How CBO Standards Are Applied*

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The data clearly indicate that CBO standards are not required universally and are not enacted uniformly within states. Our analysis indicates that the use of standards is required in a sub-set of early care and education programs, and typically these are programs that are heavily publicly supported. Despite their different names, the programs tend to serve at-risk populations, including children from low-income families or families where English is not the dominant language or those at-risk due to disability. This observation brings up important questions related to the use of CBO standards. If one were to compare this phenomenon to the implementation of K–12 standards, the contrast becomes quite obvious. In K–12 education, states do not *differentially* require the use of standards because in most states, a rationale for instituting standards was so that expectations for *all* children would be more even. So, why is there such a consistent pattern of partial "requirement" for the use of standards in early care and education? Is this because standards for young children are a newer phenomenon and have not yet had time to be fully "required"? Or is there something deeper, more endemic that is influencing (and potentially may continue to influence) the degree to which standards for young children are being required?

Our respondents provided helpful insights as to why states have not developed CBO standards that are universally required. First, they noted that even though young children are receiving increased policy attention, they are still regarded somewhat differently from older children. Young children, while increasingly seen as competent learners, are still regarded as somewhat "innocent." Indeed, in sentiment and law, young children remain an integral part of the family. Unlike older children, they do not belong to society; their schools and caring institutions do not act *in loco parentis*.

This thinking is manifest with regard to standards. One respondent, for example, discussed the opposition of both the state and the public to requiring standards for young children because such a requirement was perceived as "overstepping the boundaries" of the state into the realm of the family and family choice. Not a new theme in early care and education, there has been reluctance for the public to intervene in the lives of young children except in times of social crises, such as the Great Depression and World War II (Cahan, 1989). It may also be the case that the early childhood education field, itself, has been reluctant to develop CBO standards for philosophical reasons. Young children have historically been viewed by early childhood educators as qualitatively different from older children, and their development has been described as episodic, sporadic, and highly impacted by the environment (Shepard, Kagan, & Wurtz, 1998). Therefore, the very nature of early childhood development may not be seen as lending itself to "standards."

Additionally, states may be reticent to implement standards for preschoolers statewide for very practical reasons. First, standards for young children are very new, so moving slowly with a partial, almost pilot-like, strategy makes sense. It gives states the opportunity to work through some of the implementation issues. Second, states may not have the resources, either fiscal or human, to actually implement standards statewide. Indeed, a respondent from Michigan cited the high cost to the state as a primary reason that required standards are limited to its Michigan School Readiness Programs (MSRP). In an era of constrained resources, this reason is not to be overlooked. While a complete explanation for why states have developed CBO standards and then applied them only to particular programs, or made them completely voluntary, would require additional exploration, it is safe to say that decisions about to whom and how CBO standards will be applied are based upon a complex set of factors that seem to lead to partial implementation and less than mandatory requirements.

### *CBO Standards and Accountability*

The standards movement within the K–12 education system, for the most part, is associated with increased accountability. Many K–12 standards are intended to hold schools and teachers accountable for teaching certain content and, at select gateway years, to hold students accountable for learning the specified content. As discussed above, in the case of 21 of the 29 CBO standards, programs are expected to use the CBO standards. We now turn to the degree to which programs

with these expected standards are actually held accountable for the standards. The research team sought to discern the degree to which the CBO standards are to be used for accountability purposes, either for program accountability or for holding students accountable for knowing certain content. The answer to the later is that *none* of the CBO standards are being or are intended to be used to make accountability decisions for children—no state reported that its CBO standards would be used to make promotion or placement decisions about children.

That being said, the accountability uses of CBO standards for program decisions presents a much more complex picture of how CBO standards are or will eventually be used to hold programs accountable. States appeared to take two different approaches to holding programs accountable for using the CBO standards: 1) alignment of curriculum with the CBO standards or 2) evidence that children are learning skills and developing characteristics consistent with those outlined in the CBO standards.

*Curriculum Alignment*

Two states report that programs will be held accountable for using the CBO standards in designing their curriculum and/or their programming—Illinois and Louisiana. In Illinois, for instance, a respondent indicated, "In the 2003 funding year, state-funded pre-kindergartens are required to align curriculum with the early learning standards." Louisiana is developing a coding system for programs to use to document their use of the CBO standards in curriculum planning. Notes a respondent, "School principals and directors must keep a record of the lesson plans, and state supervisors and superintendents will use this coding system to determine that the standards were used as a guide when the lesson plans were prepared and that teachers are 'teaching from the standards.'" While there is no formal penalty at this time for programs that do not document use of the CBO standards in curriculum planning, plans call for the coding system to be used on a regular basis to determine if programs are using the CBO standards. Thus, while the most frequently cited purpose for developing the CBO standards was to improve curriculum and instruction, only two states have systems to hold programs accountable for using the CBO standards in curriculum planning.

*Children's Progress on CBO Standards*

The second strategy for holding programs accountable for using the CBO standards is to examine the degree to which children in the programs are developing skills and characteristics described in the CBO standards. This type of program accountability, as it is commonly understood, means that programs or schools are held accountable not only for implementing standards but also for children's performance outcomes. In the K–12 system, the consequence for programs that do not measure up by way of student achievement is usually a reduction in funding. It appears from the survey data that no state was implementing this type of accountability system at the time of the interviews but that several states were poised to implement such a system.

We turn now to examine how states propose to collect data that could be used to determine children's progress on CBO standards and, therefore, to hold programs accountable for child outcomes. States seem to have approached a CBO standards accountability system and data collection for the purpose of determining whether children enrolled in programs were meeting the CBO standards in one of three ways: 1) a model where accountability for the CBO standards and data collection are directly related, 2) a model where program evaluation data are collected and the CBO standards are an important part of the program implementation, and 3) general data on children's readiness for school are collected and the CBO standards may be a factor in promoting the progress of children enrolled in programs using the CBO standards.

*CBO Standards and Child Outcome Data Directly Related*

In four states—California, Maine—Early Learning Results, New Mexico, and Washington–ECEAP—the CBO standards are actually the basis for a data collection system, and programs are, therefore, going to be evaluated in some way based on the performance of children within their programs. It is important to note that none of these states had implemented their accountability systems at the time of the interview. They were each in the process of developing and testing the system. Although they each had developed a slightly different system, the common denominator in the "directly related" accountability states was that the CBO standards and the data collection mechanism were one and the same: CBO standards were developed for the purpose of collecting data on the degree to which children in the program exhibited the skills and characteristics described in the CBO standards. What follows is a brief description of each state's CBO standards and accountability system.

*California.* In California, the Desired Results system will be used to determine the degree to which children within state subsidized child care programs are progressing toward the CBO standards. The general premise behind the system is that results of the programs should be used to gauge the effectiveness of state subsidized programs and whether or not the programs are providing quality care and learning experiences for children that prepare them for success in school. According to the survey respondent, the administration decided to "first start with results and not program standards. [The department] then developed program standards based on the 'Desired Results.'" The Department established four child-related Desired Results for programs, and then the CBO standards and assessment instruments that include indicators related to these Desired Results were articulated. Teacher observation tools based on developmental milestones for each age span, family surveys, and measures of program quality were developed. The result is called the Desired Results System and Developmental Profile. All state subsidized child care programs will be required to use the instrument. The state has begun a four-year phase-in period. Beginning in July 2002, programs were required to begin using the instrument. Once the program is phased in, children will be assessed at specific points in time (according to age) and data from the assessments will be used to make program adjustments and "assess program results." The system will not be used to make decisions about individual children, but it can be used as a basis for referrals for further evaluations in cases where children are not progressing on the indicators.

*Maine—Early Learning Results.* Maine's Early Learning Results CBO standards articulate child outcomes for children birth through five who are enrolled in the state's special education programs. The CBO standards are linked to the state's K–12 standards and are presented in a format that is consistent with the K–12 standards. Outcomes have been developed to identify important measures of program performance, and then indicators have been provided for use as a measure of program performance toward the outcome. For example, one program outcome in the physical domain is that "all children eligible for and receiving services for physical development in the Contractor's catchment area, by the age of 5, will demonstrate the ability to discriminate by taste, smell, texture, sound, and light." Corresponding indicators have been developed that describe how children might demonstrate this outcome by age three and then by age five. Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs) written for children within the special education program are required to be consistent with the outcomes included in the Early Learning Results CBO standards.

The state is developing the CBO standards for specific domains and expects to have the CBO standards adopted when all domains have been developed. Although the data collection process is still being developed, when fully implemented, programs will report the number of children who attained each outcome and indicator, as well as how long the children have been receiving services, to the Department of Education.

*New Mexico.* In New Mexico, the Focused Portfolio assessment system is being used to define and collect data on the state's CBO standards. The Focused Portfolio system is a framework for authentic assessment through observation and documentation of performance against accepted

developmental milestones. The milestones are articulated in a developmental milestone chart and are the state's CBO standards. The impetus for the system came from a legislative mandate for accountability and outcomes-based budgeting of state-funded programs. The Office of Child Development wanted to use an authentic assessment system for early childhood programs and needed a way to quantify data from the assessments. The Focused Portfolio system was adopted as a developmentally appropriate assessment system that could provide quantifiable data on children's progress. Based on their observations and samples of children's work, teachers report on children's progress toward the milestones. Parents are also asked to provide data on their child's progress. State-funded pre-kindergarten programs must use the system. A database is being developed that will aggregate data on individual children at the program level. The data will then be used to gauge how effective programs are in helping children meet the developmental milestones. Although programs are currently using the Focused Portfolios, it is expected that two or three additional years will be needed to provide training and develop the database. The system will not be fully operational before 2004 or 2005.

*Washington—ECEAP.* Washington's Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) developed outcomes and indicators as a part of its program evaluation design. These CBO standards are known as the ECEAP Performance Standards and are intended to be used to collect data and make judgments about the effectiveness of programs. They are the basis for a program evaluation. A series of indicators providing a specific description of the skills and characteristics expected within each outcome were developed. When the system is finalized, teachers will utilize direct assessments and observations to collect data on children, and families will be asked to complete a questionnaire to provide data on children. Although no individual child outcome data were being collected at the time of the interview, program data, such as demographics and immunization rates, were being collected. According to one respondent, the state was also piloting the use of a social and emotional norm-referenced assessment tool (the DECA) "to gauge effectiveness of early childhood programming and the growth of children in this domain as they enter and leave ECEAP." The Department was in the process of awarding an evaluation contract that would include collecting data on the outcomes and indicators, but plans for both the pilot project using the DECA and the evaluation have been put on hold due to budget short falls.

The common thread between these four states is that the CBO standards are part of an accountability system where data will be collected on children's progress toward the CBO standards. Although none of these states have plans to use the data to make decisions about individual children, they do intend to use the data to gauge programs' effectiveness in helping children make progress on the indicators included in the CBO standards. These states potentially may have some of the highest accountability requirements related to CBO standards, particularly if they eventually begin making funding decisions based on how children within the programs are progressing on the CBO standards.

*Program Evaluation and an Indirect Link to CBO Standards*

Four states—Florida, Georgia, Michigan, and Ohio—expect programs to use their CBO standards and collect program evaluation data that are logically, but not directly, linked to use of the CBO standards. In these states, the assumption is that the CBO standards are an important part of the program design and are, therefore, contributing to how programs are performing on the evaluation.

Georgia developed its CBO standards, known as Learning Goals, when the Office of School Readiness' universal pre-kindergarten program was first established to articulate the child-based outcomes the program would promote. Programs are expected to implement activities that facilitate children's progress toward the Learning Goals. A longitudinal evaluation of the program is being conducted by the Applied Research Center at Georgia State University. Data are being collected on a variety of program quality measures, as well as child outcome measures, from a sample of children enrolled in the program. The measures are related to the CBO standards (Learning Goals)

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but are not a direct measure of whether children are meeting the Learning Goals established for the program. Similar to Georgia, Michigan's School Readiness Program is conducting a longitudinal program evaluation that includes data on child outcomes from a sample of children. The state's CBO standards are consistent with the data being collected, but the child outcome measures are not a direct reflection of the CBO standards.

Ohio and Florida are in the process of developing assessment systems that are more directly aligned with the state's CBO standards. Ohio has developed the Indicators of Success Project to collect data on child outcomes and to determine if children in the program are demonstrating progress while they are enrolled. Data are collected on children's progress in the language and literacy, mathematics, and social development domains. State-funded preschool programs are required to document children's progress using the Galileo assessment tool and to report aggregate data annually to the state (in addition to program performance data such as teacher and child attendance rates, teacher and child turnover rates, and teacher credentials). In the Galileo system, teachers record children's progress along a developmental path of sequenced items based on their naturalistic observations of whether or not individual children have demonstrated the capabilities described in the items. According to a survey respondent, the items included in the Galileo assessment are "aligned" or "linked" to the state's CBO standards. At the state level, the data are used to see whether groups of children are making gains on the various indicators. While the system prohibits the data from being used to make decisions about placements for individual children, plans call for the program-level data to eventually be used as a basis for program funding decisions.

Florida is developing an assessment system to provide child outcome data. A Standards and Measures Outcome Work Group has developed CBO standards, established a framework for assessment, and developed a plan for uniform screening for children entering kindergarten. These three tasks were mandated by the legislature, and the Work Group was also charged with developing plans for how they would be carried out. According to a survey respondent, the Work Group made specific recommendations for assessment instruments that "were consistent with performance standards." The survey respondent indicated that the uniform assessment system would be implemented in the 2002 school year to provide data that will give "a sense of how standards are being met or achieved" in the school readiness programs. The system will collect data on children as they enter kindergarten and will include a direct assessment of children's knowledge and skills, as well as teacher observations, parent questionnaires, and a health form to be completed by the child's parents and physician. The Department of Education will establish a data warehouse for the direct assessment data and will perhaps include the other forms of data that are going to be collected on children as they enter kindergarten.

These states are collecting data on children's characteristics that are related to the CBO standards but not a direct reflection of the CBO standards. In the case of Ohio and Florida, the relationship between the data collected and the CBO standards appears to be more direct and perhaps more informative as to whether children are exhibiting characteristics described in the CBO standards.

*General Data on Children's Characteristics*

Finally, two states are developing or implementing assessment systems to collect general information on children's readiness when they enter school. Maryland is implementing an assessment system to collect data on children's characteristics as they enter kindergarten. Maryland's Model for School Readiness (MMSR) program uses the Work Sampling System to collect baseline data on children who have recently entered kindergarten. Teachers rate children on indicators of particular areas of development, and the data are reported to the state by domain. Data are also collected on children's experiences prior to entering kindergarten. These baseline data provide a sense of the skills and characteristics of all children entering kindergarten and are intended to be used for planning purposes at the state and local level. While the data collected as part of the MMSR may be consistent with the state's CBO standards, the link between CBO

standards and child outcomes is relatively weak, and, in fact, the purpose of the data collection is not to document children's progress toward specific goals or CBO standards but to provide information on potential gaps in service.

Minnesota is developing a similar system to collect data on children's status as they enter school. At the time of the interview, the state was developing plans to collect data on a pilot sample of children entering kindergarten using select Work Sampling Indicators completed by kindergarten teachers. Data will also be collected on whether children participated in preschool programs so that findings on children's skills and abilities might be linked to preschool attendance. Data will also be collected on the "readiness" of schools that the kindergarteners enter. The respondent reported that the state expected to conduct a pilot of the system in the fall of 2002.

*Assessment Data and Program Accountability: A Thing of the Future?*

Based on the states described above, one can conclude that no state is at this time holding programs accountable for children's progress toward skills and characteristics included in the state's CBO standards. California, Florida, Maine—Early Learning Results, New Mexico, Ohio, and Washington—ECEAP report that they are in the process of developing systems whereby assessment data from children enrolled in the program will be used to make decisions about programs. Survey data indicate that these states may be joined by other states in the future.

Of the 19 states where respondents indicated that programs are not currently held accountable for the CBO standards and a data collection system is not currently in place or under development, 11 respondents indicated that they anticipate that such a system is at least a possibility in the future. These states included Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Utah, and Washington—OSPI. The responses ranged from states that have concrete plans in place for data collection systems to respondents who indicated that there was no system at this point in time but it was a possibility in the future.

Illinois represents one state where plans are underway for an assessment system, but the system is too new to determine how the data will be used systematically. State-funded pre-kindergarten programs are required to align their curriculum with the state's CBO standards in the 2003 funding year. The state is developing the Illinois Early Learning Work Sampling System that will provide performance data on child outcomes. Classroom teachers are being trained to use the Work Sampling System to collect data on children's progress. While this assessment system is in the early stages of implementation and currently there is no systematic way of aggregating the data at the state level, it is likely that a data management system will be developed.

Arkansas is looking at the possibility of conducting a longitudinal study, and Rhode Island is considering the possibility of developing an assessment system. Utah has considered plans to collaborate with a university to collect data in the future, but the planning process has not been funded. It seems that there is a general recognition that CBO standards may someday be associated with greater levels of accountability and data collection in these states, although the degree to which plans are underway to develop such a system varies widely. One respondent noted, "No decisions are based on early learning standards now. We are in a state of flux as we watch what occurs on the national scene.... Currently we are working to build capacity that may lead to accountability decisions related to curriculum use or recommended teaching strategies."

*Implications of Implementation Issues*

As with our findings on the characteristics of the CBO standards and the processes states have used to develop CBO standards, our analysis of the data indicates that the use of CBO standards also varies widely from state to state. Two common denominators are that most of the CBO standards

were developed for publicly funded early care and education programs and that all states intended for the CBO standards to improve instruction within the classrooms. However, states vary tremendously in how they are disseminating the CBO standards, the support they are providing, and the degree to which programs are held accountable for using the CBO standards. Data from the survey do indicate that it is possible in many states that programs may someday be held accountable for using the CBO standards and demonstrating child outcomes consistent with the CBO standards. California, New Mexico, Maine, and Washington seem to be moving further toward holding programs accountable for using the CBO standards.

The increasing likelihood that states will develop large-scale assessment systems and that these systems may be related to CBO standards brings forth a number of issues that need to be addressed. First, it is unclear at this point what the full implications of having CBO standards are for early childhood programs. Most states that have developed CBO standards have limited experience implementing them. At the same time, issues related to large-scale assessment systems for children of this age loom large. Development at this age does not lend itself to standardized expectations or assessments. Preschool-age children's development is uneven and often occurs in spurts. Furthermore, it is highly impacted by the child's experiences, which vary tremendously from child to child (National Research Council, 2001; Shepard, Kagan, & Wurtz, 1998). Finally, the field is somewhat limited in the assessment instruments available to capture information about the various developmental domains. While there has been progress in some domains (such as cognition and language), we lack credible and fair instruments to document children's abilities in other domains, such as social-emotional development (Kagan, Moore, & Bredekamp, 1995; Scott-Little, Kagan, & Clifford, 2003).

Consistency between the purpose of the assessment and the purpose of the CBO standards, alignment of particular items on the assessment with indicators described in the CBO standards, and alignment of the curriculum with both the CBO standards and the assessment are immediate issues that must be addressed as states move toward assessment systems that are related to CBO standards. First, it is essential that states be clear on the purpose for implementing CBO standards and the assessments that they use. In some cases, it may be difficult to find or develop assessments that match the purpose for which the CBO standards have been developed. If standards are to be used to guide instruction, corresponding assessments for use in planning learning experiences are needed. There are examples of authentic assessments that can be used to guide instruction (for instance, the Work Sampling System, by Meisels et al., 1994, and High/Scope Child Observation Record by the High/Scope Foundation, 1992). However, we have little information on whether these instructional assessments align with the CBO standards that have been developed. If CBO standards are to be used to determine a program's effectiveness in helping children obtain designated skills and characteristics, there may be fewer options for valid and reliable instruments. Assessments to determine program accountability are relatively new in the field of early childhood education, and much work is needed to develop practical, valid, and reliable sources of data. Finally, screening assessments to identify children with potential disabilities are more widely available, but the purpose does not correspond with the purpose of CBO standards. Programs may be tempted to use data from screening instruments for other purposes, such as verifying whether children are making progress on skills and characteristics described in CBO standards documents. Careful consideration will be necessary to articulate clearly the purpose of the CBO standards and then select or develop assessments that are appropriate for the intended purpose.

Given that a state may have CBO standards and an assessment system that were both developed for the same purpose, our attention next must turn to how individual items or indicators within the CBO standards and the assessment align. Are the descriptions of skills and characteristics described in the CBO standards document consistent with the items contained within the assessment? In states, such as New Mexico, where the CBO standards and the assessment instruments were developed together and, indeed, are in many ways one and the same, consistency may not be difficult. However, in states where assessments are developed separately from CBO standards, a great deal of analysis will

be necessary to gauge the degree to which there is consistency. For instance, do the assessment and the CBO standards address the same developmental domains? Within domains, are specific skills and characteristics articulated the same way in both and at about the same developmental level?

Finally, and perhaps more importantly, the implementation of CBO standards and corresponding assessment systems brings into focus the need to examine the curriculum and daily activities children experience in early childhood programs. Assessment is an essential part of curriculum planning and intervention (National Research Council, 2001; Meisels & Atkins-Burnett, 2000; Shepard, Kagan & Wurtz, 1998), and presumably CBO standards are also linked to the curriculum. Nevertheless, we know little about the interplay between CBO standards, assessment, and the daily activities of children. At one extreme, one might imagine a situation where teachers pay little attention to CBO standards and their corresponding assessments. In this situation, the curriculum and daily activities may or may not address the skills and characteristics articulated in the CBO standards. At the other extreme, teachers might take CBO standards (and/or their corresponding assessments) and attempt to turn them into the classroom curriculum, i.e. "teaching to the test." It stands to reason that neither of these extremes is beneficial for children or for the programs in which they are enrolled. Ideally there would be an appropriate alignment between curriculum, CBO standards, and assessment. However, our knowledge of how to bring about this type of alignment is limited, and we know less about potential impact of standards/assessment/curriculum alignment on children and programs. Presumably a great deal of professional development and support will be needed to assist teachers in implementing standards, assessments, and curricula activities that are consistent and support each other. Further research will be needed to guide practitioners and policymakers as states move toward assessments that correspond to CBO standards.

The issues of how CBO standards are used and the degree to which programs are held accountable for CBO standards seem to be emerging. Further research will be necessary to determine the degree of consistency between the CBO standards' intended purposes and their actual uses, as well as the strategies that states develop to hold programs accountable for using the CBO standards.

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## SECTION VII: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In every major endeavor to improve the condition of young children, there can be tremendous benefits and some genuine, however unintended, pitfalls. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the findings of this study and to share some ideas regarding how the data might be used to increase the benefits while minimizing the pitfalls. It should be noted that we draw the themes for this discussion from the data and then make corresponding recommendations in italics. In some cases, the recommendations, while rooted in the data, draw upon the authors' familiarity with the subject.

*The Challenge of Inconsistent Nomenclature*

Throughout this study, we have found it necessary to continually explicate our terms. When collecting data, knowledgeable informants often used the term "standards" to refer to program standards, a convention that has existed in the field for decades. Because of this long-standing practice of having the word "standards" associated with program inputs, it is very challenging to convert discourse to alter the focus not only to children but also to outputs or child outcomes. For example, during the course of our data collection, several respondents completed the whole interview telling us that they had CBO standards only to send us program standards as their "standards." In other states, respondents said they did not have CBO standards, but upon further examination, we learned that they indeed did.

To be sure, confusion exists about what the word "standards" means and about the different kinds of standards that exist. But the confusion does not end there. As noted in the text, states use very different terms even when discussing child-based learning outcomes, with the terms "benchmarks," "indicators," and "guidelines" prevailing. In some cases, the terms are most accurate because of how states intend them to be used. For example, the term "guidelines" implies that the users should not consider the content required, but rather a guide to instruction and/or assessment. However, this is not always the case. Sometimes the documents may be called "guidelines," but there is the intention that they will be used. This confounding of the content of the document and its intended use is a recurring theme. A related nomenclature problem arises because there is some tentativeness on the part of the issuers of the documents to demand or require the use of the created CBO standards. States may want localities or programs to make independent decisions concerning the use of the standards, or they may be somewhat timid, given the historic reluctance toward standards and assessment with children of this age, about requiring their use.

Perhaps the greatest reason for the nomenclature confusion is that the early care and education field, because of its highly decentralized nature and its conflicting social history, has long had difficulty coming to agreement on terms of any sort, and "standards" is simply one more in a long series of nomenclature confusions. Take for example the names the field applies to itself: early childhood education, early care and education, child care, and preschool. For those inside the field, these terms carry with them important distinctions, and so it is with standards. For those who work closely with them, the terms "benchmarks," "guidelines," "standards," and "learning outcomes" all have distinct meanings. Perhaps as more people become familiar with the early childhood standards issues, the terms will be clearer. At present, however, we have found great diversity in how people talk about and label (either in writing or in discourse) "CBO standards."

Recognizing the intensity of the nomenclature problem, there is important work underway to create a lexicon of terms around standards and outcomes. Led by the Council of Chief State School Officers and enjoined by representatives of prominent organizations, this work should prove most helpful and should be widely disseminated.

The issue of cloudy nomenclature should not be confused, however, with the efforts by some states to develop different kinds of standards, with some focused on what children should know and be

able to do (CBO standards), some focused on program performance standards, and still others concentrated on the development of instructional standards. In this case, there is not nomenclature confusion but rather the intention to develop distinct sets of standards for different purposes.

> ***Recommendation:*** *Develop a common nomenclature for CBO standards. We recommend the term "early learning standards." It should be noted that is not the term we have used in this document because we felt it necessary to be quite explicit about the subject of our work and, therefore, felt the need to state that we were concerned with child-based outcome standards. Hopefully, over time, this label can be eliminated and one that is more user-friendly, like early learning standards, substituted.*

*The Issue of Inclusion*

Throughout this work, we have been impressed with the consistency of the commitment to including all children in the standards efforts. In nearly every document, the words "all children" appear. The intent of universal application is quite clear. For far too long, insufficiently high expectations have been set for children who were perceived to have difficulty learning. Often this imagined "difficulty to learn" was associated with income and/or race. In an effort to set universally high expectations, the common language and intent of the standards movement is to be all inclusive.

It is important to note, however, that grave concerns are simultaneously expressed regarding children who have learning challenges, including, for example, children with disabilities and English language learners. While it is rhetorically appropriate to be inclusive, serious challenges are manifest if one takes the application of these standards, with no modifications, to apply to all children. For many reasons, the silent secret that few are addressing is the real need to somehow tailor the standards for the very limited number of children who do face documented learning challenges. In an effort to set very high learning standards for all children, we must recognize an emerging conundrum: children do vary on every measurable characteristic, and while we may establish common standards for all children, for a limited number of children, some alternations in timing, sequence, and patterns of instruction and expectations may be necessary. Although not popular to discuss, the need for modifications must be addressed if the standards movement is to reach its potential.

***Recommendations:*** *Consider the development of a national panel or task force to address the relationship between universal standards and the unique needs of limited numbers of young children. Such a group should address the content and application of standards for children with disabilities and English language learners, in particular, with the goal of advancing the expectations and learning outcomes for all children.*

*The Nature of CBO Standards' Content*

This study, while not a content analysis per se, reveals some rich preliminary findings regarding the content of the CBO standards. It is important to note that large numbers of states with CBO standards have addressed all five dimensions of school readiness specified by the National Education Goals Panel: physical and motor development, social and emotional development, approaches toward learning, language and communication skills, and cognitive development. In states where CBO standards did not address all five domains, the two most often lacking were approaches toward learning and social and emotional development.

We suspect that there may be various reasons for this phenomenon. First, in some cases, these domains might have simply not been a priority for the state. We have seen that often states begin with CBOs in one domain—often literacy or math—and then move on to others. So, it may well be that approaches to learning and social and emotional development will be covered in the future. A second reason why there may have been less emphasis here is that the majority of states have aligned their standards with those in K–12, where there is often less focus on these domains than for early childhood. Therefore, there may be less incentive for their inclusion in standards for younger children. Finally, these areas may have been given somewhat less attention because they are more difficult to operationalize. Whatever the rationale, it is important to note the lack of emphasis in some domains and the simultaneous focus in other domains of development.

No matter what the reason for the relatively limited attention to social-emotional and approaches toward learning domains within the CBO standards, the trend is disturbing. In the comprehensive review of early childhood research entitled *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development*, the National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (2000) present evidence that these domains are inextricably related to children's later development and learning. The report notes that "the growth of self-regulation is a cornerstone of early childhood development that cuts across all domains of behavior" (p. 26). Furthermore, the report concludes that "establishing relationships with other children is a central task of the early childhood years. The success with which young children accomplish this objective can affect whether they will walk pathways to competence or deviance as they move into middle childhood and adolescent years" (p. 180). Clearly, these domains are key to children's later success. Given the potential for driving curricula through CBO standards, it stands to reason that states should address these key domains, and we recommend that states continue to work toward including standards that reflect these domains.

We noted also that there was a slight trend to include standards for foreign language. There are many reasons why this might be the case. For example, it may be the result of states' need to honor the languages of their many English-language learners, or it may be due to the impact of the brain research that stresses children's early capacity for language facility. The inclusion of these standards may also be due to the realization that we are living in a global society and that learning multiple languages can best prepare young children for the world they will encounter. In reality, the most probable reason that states have covered foreign languages in their early childhood standards is that when the CBO standards were developed, they were based on (or included as part of) K–12 standards that addressed foreign languages. Whatever the rationale, the occurrence is interesting.

***Recommendations:*** *Given the potency of the standards to drive instruction in programs, to guide pre- and in-service training, and to serve as accountability instruments, it is critical that all five dimensions be included. If not, there is strong likelihood that the curriculum will be weighted toward domains that, while critically important, do not reflect the integration and richness of children's early learning needs. We strongly recommend that states address the social-emotional and approaches to learning domains as part of their CBO standards. We also recommend that states give consideration to the importance of providing opportunities for children to learn a second language as part of their standards development process.*

*Developing CBO Standards*

As noted in the study, the development of CBO standards is a comparatively new phenomenon, with most of the work being incepted in 2000 or thereafter. Only nine states had standards prior to 2000 and seven prior to 1999, so there was a limited experiential base from which virgin developers of standards for young children could draw. In addition, each of the states has its own history, attitudes, and values, both toward standards and toward early care and education. These factors conspire to create fairly unique developmental processes in the states. To that end, we applaud the work of the National Association for the Education of Young Children in its recent position statement that provides guidelines for standards development.

Among the earliest issues, noted in this document and elsewhere, that developers face is specifying the purpose and intended use of the standards. We noted that many of the standards development efforts emerged with close links to public education and the pressure for accountability being felt there. We also noted that many state legislatures, investing new dollars in early care and education programs, were anxious to have information on the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of their investments. Having measurable standards was deemed one way to discern this. Our analysis indicated that often these precipitating events framed the rationale for the standards and the timeline and process for their development. For example, in some states with a strong legislative impetus, the time available for standards development was short, sometimes forcing either a less inclusive standards development process or a more restricted focus of the standards content. This may partially account for the reality that many states develop standards in one or two domains (literacy and math) initially, then return to the process to add on other domains.

The political context may also help account for the standards development/re-development process that we observed. In one state, for example, a set of standards was developed during the tenure of one governor; when a new governor took office, a new set of standards was called for. In other states, because of education-related mandates, standards were developed that were attached to the K–12 standards, but with more time, new standards that are more "early childhood in nature" are being developed. Conversely, in some states, the standards developed were not sufficiently academic in orientation and are being re-designed to accommodate the political press for more content-oriented standards. Clearly, the political context helped frame the intentions, conceptualization, and content of the standards in states where CBO standards exist. The potency of political context is also evidenced in states where there are no CBO standards. Recall that concerns about the hegemony of local control were offered as a rationale for the absence of a state role in CBO standards efforts. The first lesson related to development, then, is that the CBO standards efforts do not fall on a tabula rasa; to the contrary, they are clear products of their political-philosophical environs.

A second consideration that emerged in the development phase was whether the standards being developed would apply to all preschool-aged children (typically ages three to five) or to only those children who were nearing their formal school entry (five-year-olds) and whether to include even younger children (birth through age three). States had to decide whether to target their standards at a range of ages (typically three to five years) or a specific point in time (completion of preschool or beginning of kindergarten). Given concerns about CBO standards possibly being used as a gatekeeper to keep children from entering kindergarten, this was an important decision, since CBO standards covering a broad range of ages might be less likely to lend themselves to being used to make placement decisions about individual children.

Beyond this, the ages of the children for whom the standards were being developed also influenced who was to be involved in the process, which agency took leadership, and the content to be addressed. Our analysis revealed that the development of the standards was most often geared to older preschool children (four- and five-year-olds) and was strongly linked to the state education system. Only four states reported CBO standards for children from birth to 36 months, though some states, having developed standards for four- and five-year-olds, are now turning to the development of standards for younger children. As these standards emerge, it will be important to discern how they align with standards for older preschoolers.

A third issue for consideration in the CBO standards development process was how to approach the linkage between the CBO standards and the kindergarten or K–12 standards. It is clear from the interview data that states felt it was vitally important that their CBO standards were in some way related to the K–12 standards. Each of the respondents reported that his or her state's CBO standards were in some way linked to the K–12 standards. However, states varied tremendously in how this linkage was operationalized. In some states, the actual K–12 standards were incorporated into the CBO standards (or vice versa). In others, developmental domains or subject areas from the K–12 standards were used in the CBO standards; others saw their standards as linked to the K–12 standards although evidence of the linkage within the document was less obvious. Another consideration is whether the CBO standards are seen as building to the K–12 standards or as an extension of the K–12 standards downward into early childhood settings. There is clearly a desire to see the CBO standards related to the K–12 standards, but exactly how that is carried out may be an important decision point for states in their process of developing CBO standards.

Another issue for consideration, related to some of the political-philosophical context issues discussed earlier, was the role of the state and the role of separate localities in the development of the standards. In almost all cases, the state took leadership in the development of the CBO standards that were to be considered "state" standards. It should be noted, however, that during our conversations with informants, we did learn about other sets of CBO standards, many of which were locally developed. In addition, some states considered providing guideline standards at the state level with some discretion accorded the local level for adaptation to meet local needs, cultures, and contexts. Just how the standards will be used and what capacity exists for aggregation of any data collected based on the CBO standards under these conditions merit consideration in the development phase.

Finally, we did note some trends in the development phases between states that were early adopters of standards and those that were later adopters of standards. In the case of the early adopters, they were pioneers forging new terrain, with less of an information base to build upon. Later developers had the benefit of the pioneers and often drew on their experiences and standards. We noted that often states relied on or at least reviewed the work of other states as sources for their own work. In some cases, more than paper exchanges took place; individuals engaged in the process linked with each other, attended conferences, and shared resources. In these cases, the later-developing states had the benefit of the work of others, and this often led to expedited processes.

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***Recommendations:*** *The task of developing CBO standards is extremely complex. States should clearly articulate why they are developing standards at the beginning of the process, allow sufficient time for the process (data indicate at least a year), and make thoughtful decisions about who should be included in order to ensure that key stakeholders are represented and there is sufficient expertise (both in terms of child development and knowledge of the program to which the standards will be applied) to generate CBO standards that are valid and useful. States should take steps to ensure that the most up-to-date research and content knowledge is used in the development of the standards. In addition to embarking on the development of standards with solid knowledge, clear intentions, and sufficient time, resources to support the standards development process must be established. Such resources might include exchanges in the form of ongoing symposia, workshops, and retreats where those charged with standards development can share documents, information, and experiences that would make the development process more efficient and potentially more effective.*

*Use of CBO Standards*

Perhaps the most complicated set of issues connected to CBO standards relates to their use. These issues take several forms. First, there is the issue of the universality of application. We noted, for example, that states elected to apply the use of standards differently. In some states, usage was recommended across all programs serving the age cohort for whom the standards were intended in the state, so that if the standards were developed for four-year-old children, their use would be recommended statewide for this age population. More often than not, however, this was not the pattern. Typically, a state recommended or required the use of the developed standards within a sub-set of the state's population. Often the sub-set correlated with specific programs, often those that were funded by public dollars. So, for example, it was quite common for states to require the use of standards with specified programs serving targeted populations of young children.

In addition to minimizing the potential use of the standards, this strategy also exacerbates a divide too long prevalent in early childhood education. If the use of standards were to accelerate young children's positive learning outcomes, why would their use be limited to only some programs and some children? Will this not further increase the differences in quality among programs and the differences in outcomes for children? Under ideal circumstances, standards developed by the state should be used ubiquitously for all children. Informants indicated that states felt they did not have the right or authority to impose such standards on all programs, particularly those in the for-profit sector and family child care programs. Here the unique history of early childhood education reappears and contours the use of standards. Because, unlike K–12 education, early childhood education is not compulsory and is not fully publicly funded, the legality of imposing requirements (in this case, standards) on all programs is still questioned. While state regulations do exist in all states, they do not apply to all programs, with many being legally exempt. A question, then, to be addressed is one that combines implementation authority with equity: How can states foster equitable child outcomes when they have inequitable program responsibility?

A second challenge, also deeply rooted in the history of early childhood education, is the development of multiple sets of standards within a state. Alluded to earlier within the context of different sets of standards existing for different age groups, the problem of multiple standards also exists, and is perhaps more troublesome, for children of the same age group. In many states, programs promulgate their own standards in addition to those that the state has developed. Throughout the nation, for example, Head Start has now required the use of its child outcomes within its programs. However, those programs also rest within states and often use state funds to support some of their activities. The problem for programs, then, is which set of standards to meet,

those promulgated by the state or those advanced by their own program. The situation is made even more complex when funds from several sources are used to serve the children and their families; programs legitimately feel dual accountability.

The issue of multiple sets of standards is problematic for the programs and reflects the age-old schism in the field. Historically, early childhood has been funded as a series of discrete programs, each with its own standards, requirements, and regulations. Now, rather than using standards as the natural and cogent glue to bind the intentions of all early childhood programs and to unite them around common goals for children, the standards—as they are unfolding in many states—have become another domain of contention and difference. In some cases, the existence of multiple sets of standards could lead directors who do not want to be accountable to these different standards to re-organize their programs and pull apart healthy collaborations that have linked funding streams to provide comprehensive services for children. Therefore, the lack of uniform standards could force program leaders to undo much of their effective linkage work because they do want to impose double accountability on teachers and themselves. From this perspective, how the use of standards unfolds, particularly when a single program is required to meet several sets of standards, will be important for the field. At once, the field has the opportunity to use standards to link programs or to sever and inhibit such relationships. From a systems perspective, this is a critical consideration for standards implementation, particularly in light of the recent *Good Start, Grow Smart* initiative's call for voluntary early learning guidelines to be developed for child care programs. Potential exists for yet another set of standards to be developed in states.

The third issue that emerges in discussions of the use of standards relates directly to how states intend for the standards to be used in the programs that are using them—the nature and intensity of the mandate. As the study reveals, the standards are being used very differently, with some states mandating their use and following up with monitoring and training and technical assistance. Other states simply issue the standards and make them available on the Web. In other cases, the standards are being used as the metric against which children's performance will be assessed. In these cases (as in all settings), it is important to consider the alignment of the standards with both the curriculum and the assessments. As we have seen, there is no consistent pattern of use that emerges. This further complicates the range of impacts that standards do and can have on children's early learning and development.

Manifesting these differences, questions emerge regarding the intentionality of the standards. Have they been developed with the goal of improving pedagogy and instructional practice, with the goal of accountability, with the goal of meeting a legislative mandate? Questions also emerge regarding the intensity or degree of requirement for use that is likely to yield results. For example, if the standards are promoted as voluntary guidelines, will they be put to use? What is the impact of a mandate on their actual use?

A fourth issue, not one based on intensity of requirement or intentionality of use, relates to the way the standards are actually being used on the front line by teachers in programs. This is where the rubber meets the road for children. Because this study drew its information from administrators primarily, we do have some idea, but not first-hand observations, regarding the use of the standards in actual programs, and like everything else related to standards, their use varies considerably. That is to say, in some settings where there is technical assistance and support of duration, our informants sensed that the standards were in greater use than in settings where there had been no technical support. Although this does make sense, ambiguity persists regarding what "use" means. Are the standards being used as guidelines to consider when planning pedagogical experiences for children? Are they being used as elements of ongoing assessments to discern what children know and are able to do? If the latter is the case, is the information garnered from the CBO standards being collected periodically and is it being used to help teachers plan and share their classroom strategies? And if this is the case, what is the relationship between the CBO standards and the

curriculum? Is the content linked? Has any mapping of the intentions of standards, the assessments, and the curriculum taken place?

Complicated questions in the abstract, these issues are even more complex in reality. At first blush, such linkage seems necessary and prudent. Yet, upon examination, the standards-assessment-curriculum trilogy opens lingering questions about the nature of early childhood pedagogy (e.g., what is an appropriate balance between teacher intentionality and child initiation? What is the nature of effective observation in early childhood classrooms? What is the appropriate content of early childhood curricula?). Couple the ambiguities associated with these issues with the reality of the challenges of implementing any reform and the magnitude of the impact of CBO standards becomes even more apparent. We know from the literature that implementing even small changes in educational settings is difficult. Using standards that are effectively linked to assessment and curriculum presents a potentially massive change for front-line staff. Much more analysis is needed to better understand how these implementation issues are playing out in states, as well as in local programs. Such analyses must examine if the use of standards is hastened by supports in the form of training and technical assistance. What are the methods of linkages in practice between standards at the preschool level and standards at the kindergarten and primary levels? What attitudinal issues must be addressed to ensure the effective use of standards? These issues await analysis, but they must not wait too long because, as we have seen, the use of CBO standards is being fostered immediately, with consequences that we have yet to fully understand.

Embedded in this set of issues is the question of the use of standards for informing parents of children's progress. Many early educators legitimately worry that families will misinterpret the press for standards and exert far more pressure on their children. While the importance of early learning is critical to emphasize for parents, sometimes this is manifest in a "drill and kill" focus. Early educators need support as they work with parents to understand the importance of standards, in general. More specifically, early educators need support in translating the results of standards-based assessments to parents in meaningful ways that inspire home-based support for age-appropriate learning.

Finally, there is a set of questions that combines the variables discussed above—universality of application, multiple standards, intensity of mandate, and the actual implementation. We question whether it is preferable to establish voluntary standards for the entire state or mandatory standards for a sub-set of programs. Is it better to have multiple sets of standards over none whatsoever? Is it preferable to require the use of standards, knowing that they will not be monitored, or simply recommend their use until a monitoring and support scheme can be established? How linked to assessment and curriculum must the standards be before their use can be recommended or supported, either on a voluntary or mandated basis? And what is the real capacity of states and the nation to produce and implement standards that are fully integrated with assessment and curriculum? Our study was not designed to yield answers to these questions, but they are empirical in nature and beg for analysis. In addressing these questions and the legion of others that will emerge, it is important to keep in mind the kind of early care and education system we hope to evolve—one with a future orientation, not predicated in and bound by the current approach to American early care and education.

> ***Recommendations:*** *Provide support to front-line staff as they implement CBO standards in the form of mentoring, workshops, and pre-service and in-service training to ensure that the standards are linked to assessment and curriculum. Ensure that this support includes the importance of effective communication of standards to parents. Provide support to states and programs as they discern how to consolidate and/or navigate multiple sets of standards. Provide a forum and funds for more systematic evaluation of the implementation and use of standards across the nation, with a specific focus on linkages among standards, assessments, and curriculum. Fund empirical*

*studies that examine the use of standards and the nature of changes in child outcomes. Examine the relationship between universality of application, multiple standards, and the intensity of the mandate.*

*How We Hold the CBO Standards*

Perhaps most important are issues related to how we hold the standards. By this we mean, what are our real intentions for creating and using standards for young children and what do we hope to genuinely accomplish by using them?

We have seen states moving rapidly to develop and introduce CBO standards. Often in the haste to implement such standards, often at the behest of legislatures or governors, time cannot or is not expended in examining the raison d'etre for the CBO standards themselves. In some cases, informants suggested that the development of the standards was in fulfillment of a state mandate and that too little time and thought and too few resources had been expended in their development and implementation. We need to question the degree to which it is expected that the standards will actually be used by program personnel and for what purposes.

Installing something as dramatic as standards into early childhood programs demands both thought and support. Thought is necessary because, as a field, many workers are not predisposed to the idea of standards or a formalized curriculum. CBO standards are a relatively new phenomena, and front-line staff have not learned about what they are or how to use them in their professional development experiences. This lack of information, coupled with some lingering questions about the appropriateness of such standards and the relatively small amount of resources that have heretofore been invested in the implementation process, could interfere with the use of CBO standards in the classroom. Understanding these issues, it is important to note that only one state—Colorado—will not disseminate guidelines without providing technical assistance and support. This strategy may limit the spread of the guidelines, but it does enhance the likelihood that the CBO standards will be understood and used with some fidelity of purpose. It may well be that if we really expect standards to be used, we need to seriously consider our dissemination and support strategies. This will enable the standards to be more than a paper document and imbue them with real purpose.

A second and related issue addresses the embeddedness of standards in K–12 education. Throughout this document, we have seen that the links to K–12 standards and K–12 education are indeed strong. The majority of the standards efforts were launched or headed by departments of education; a large number of the standards have been explicitly linked to K–12 standards, and large numbers of the standards are being used in school-related programs. We have seen that it is entirely possible for such CBO standards to be appropriate for the three- to five-year-olds and that many educators are now turning their attention to children younger than three. The question being raised by some early educators is to what extent is this involvement with the K–12 system altering the values long espoused by the early childhood education field? Can we have CBO standards that respect young children's unique developmental needs and growth paths? Can we reconcile a developmental orientation with one that is primarily curricular in orientation? Will the establishment of CBO standards by the education community undermine early educators' rightful and historic role with young children?

These legitimate questions relate to the fundamental identity of early education. Always tossed between health and human services and education, between the unstructured nature of early education and the structure of public education, early childhood is at a pivotal point in its social history. Wanting to retain its special foci, yet needing to align with the force of formal education, early childhood education is in transition. And nothing points out this transition more than the CBO standards debate and the data revealed in this analysis. It is clear that education, with its emphasis on standards and professionalization and with its stable funding, is increasingly pointing the way for early childhood education. The challenge before early educators is to make way for the benefits of

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this necessary and long-overdue alliance without sacrificing the strengths of traditional early care and education. The CBO standards movement, especially as it seems to be playing out, will give momentum to these discussions.

> ***Recommendations:*** *There is a need for open and honest discourse around CBO standards and the related system issues they evoke between formal K–12 education and early childhood education. While many states are moving toward universal pre-kindergarten, much of this activity is being conceptualized as another program, not as a means to integrate a system of care* and *education for American children. We recommend that sustained opportunities for linkage, research, and policy be developed that will address the design and implementation of a system of early care and education that is designed, supported, and implemented in concert with Head Start, child care, and the public schools.*

### *Conclusion*

This study, while directed at CBO standards and their use, has revealed that like many issues in early childhood education, CBO standards cannot stand alone. Their presence, their very being, is enmeshed with larger issues that have characterized the field for decades: equity for children across diverse programs and delivery streams and linkages with public education while retaining a developmental orientation. To understand the challenges associated with creating and implementing CBO standards is to understand the challenges associated with early childhood education. As such, CBO standards—important in their own right—may also be regarded as a critical barometer of American early care and education.

### References

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## APPENDIX A

### Early Learning Standards
### Survey of States Interview Protocol

We are conducting this study to collect data on how states have developed and defined early learning standards for children ages birth through kindergarten entry. By "early learning standards" we mean any effort a state-level organization has made to define or outline expectations for children's learning. The standards may be known under any number of titles, such as early learning frameworks, benchmarks, child outcome indicators, desired results, etc.

The information gained through this survey will be extremely beneficial for the early childhood field. The report from the survey will be the most comprehensive source of information available on early learning standards developed across the country. There are no risks for participants in this study. Responses will be recorded and reviewed by respondents for accuracy. Data will be analyzed

in such a manner that responses cannot be attributed to individual respondents. By continuing with this phone call, you agree to participate in the study. You are free to refuse to participate or to withdraw your consent to participate in this research at any time without penalty or prejudice by simply discontinuing our phone call; your participation is entirely voluntary. Your privacy will be protected because you will not be identified by name as a participant in this project.

During the phone interview for the Early Learning Standards Study, we will be asking the following questions:

State: _____

Person interviewed: _____

Position: _____

Phone number: _____

Fax number: _____

E-mail address: _____

1. Please describe how your state-level organization or agency has defined expectations for children's learning prior to entering kindergarten. Does your state have early learning standards (or frameworks, benchmarks, outcomes/indicators, etc.) to describe expectations for children's learning or behaviors between the ages of birth through kindergarten entry that are applicable across the state? ____ Yes _____ No

**If no, please skip to Question 5**

1a. What is the formal name of the early learning standards?

1b. What ages of development do they cover?

Infant/Toddler (birth to three):

Three–Five Years:

1c. Please list or describe the categories of development/skills addressed in the standards.

Infant/Toddler:

Three–Five Years:

1d. Which of the following developmental domains identified by the National Educational Goals Panel do the early learning standards cover? (Check appropriate box.)

| Age Group | Physical/ Health | Cognitive | Approaches to Learning | Social/ Emotional | Commun- ication | Other (list) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Infant/ Toddler | | | | | | |
| Three– Five Yrs. | | | | | | |

1e. Are these early learning standards descriptions of what the state-level agency/organization would **ideally** like for all children to exhibit/demonstrate or are they descriptions of characteristics/skills children are **expected** to display? (Check appropriate box.)

| Ages | Descriptions of "Ideal" | Descriptions of What is Expected |
|---|---|---|
| Infant/Toddler | | |
| Three– Five Yrs. | | |

1f. To what extent are the early learning standards linked to or modeled after standards developed for your state's K–12 system?

2. How were the *early learning standards* (expectations or child-based outcomes) developed?

2a. Why was the process started? Was there a formal legislative mandate, departmental order, etc., or was the process based on a more informal recognition of a need for such a document? Was the need for early learning standards related to the movement to develop standards for the K–12 standards? If so, how?

Infant/Toddler:

Three–Five Years:

2b. Who was included in the process of developing the standards? What groups were represented? Who headed up the effort? How long did it take?

Infant/Toddler:

Three–Five Years:

2c. How was the effort/initiative to develop the early learning standards financed? Where did the funding come from and what agency/organization had fiscal oversight for the process?

Infant/Toddler:

Three–Five Years:

2d. Are your state-level agency/organization's early learning standards based on a particular philosophical view, theory of learning, conceptual framework, and/or research-base? If so, please describe the framework used and how it is reflected in the standards.

Infant/Toddler:

Three–Five Years:

2e. Are the early learning standards modeled on other state and/or national models for standards or indicators? If so, please describe which state or national models were used.

Infant/Toddler:

Three–Five Years:

2f. How have you incorporated children with a wide range of developmental levels, especially with children from special circumstances (children with disabilities, limited English proficiency, behavioral and emotional problems, children from highly mobile and/or limited income families), into the early learning standards?

Infant/Toddler:

Three–Five Years:

2g. Have the early learning standards been formally adopted by groups, agencies, or boards? If so, please list them.

Infant/Toddler:

Three–Five Years:

2h. Do you anticipate any changes or modifications to the standards in the near future (within the next 12–18 months)? If so, please describe why the standards might be modified and how the modifications may be developed/implemented.

Infant/Toddler:

Three–Five Years:

3. How does your state-level agency/organization implement or disseminate the *early learning standards*?

3a. What program(s) use the early learning standards and how are they used?

Infant/Toddler:

Three–Five Years:

3b. Who publishes the early learning standards?

Infant/Toddler:

Three–Five Years:

3c. How do persons (teachers, administrators, parents) know about the early learning standards? How are the early learning standards made available/disseminated? (Check all that apply.)

_____ Print document available to the public
_____ Internal document (transmittal notice, memo, etc.)
_____ Video (training or promotional)
_____ Available on the Web at _____
_____ Conferences, workshops, training presentations
_____ Other: _____

3d. What resources or support systems are in place to support the use or implementation of the early learning standards?

Infant/Toddler:

Three–Five Years:

3e. Are the early learning standards used to make accountability decisions about programs or individual children (such as assigning children to programs or as a factor to determine funding or ratings for early childhood programs)? If so, please describe.

Infant/Toddler:

Three–Five Years:

4. Does your state-level agency/organization collect data to provide an indication of the degree to which the early learning standards are being met/achieved?
_____Yes _____ No

**If no, please skip to Question 4e**

4a. If so, what agency/organization is leading the effort, and can you provide any contact information?

4b. How is the process funded?

4c. Please briefly describe the type of data collected. For what purpose are the data used?

Infant/Toddler:

___ Statewide screening (health and developmental)

___ Performance data on individual child outcomes

___ Program evaluation data

Three–Five Years:

___ Statewide screening (health and developmental)

___ Performance data on individual child outcomes

___ Program evaluation data

4d. Who collects the information?

Infant/Toddler:

Three-Five Years:

4e. What sources of information are used? (Check all that apply.)

| Ages | Direct Assessment or Observation of Children's Behavior and Skills | Teacher Reports | Parent Reports | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Infant/ Toddlers | | | | |
| Three–Five Years | | | | |

4f. Is there a systematic way of pulling these data together at the state level? If so, please describe this process.

Infant/Toddler:

Three–Five Years:

4g. If your state-level agency/organization does not currently collect data related to the early learning standards, are there plans to develop a data collection system? Please describe. Who is involved in planning for the system? What agency/organization is leading the effort? How is the planning process funded?

**Please skip to Question 6**

5. If your state-level agency or organization does not currently define early learning standards (either not at all or not for a particular age group), then has your state begun to study this issue? What agency is leading the effort? Who is involved? Please describe the process you have been/will be using. Where is the funding for the initiative coming from? What further actions are planned?

Infant/Toddlers:

Three–Five Years:

6. Is there anyone else within your state you would suggest that we talk with about state-level efforts to develop and/or use early learning standards? If so, how should we contact him/her?

7. Have any local communities or school districts within your state developed particularly good models for early learning standards? If so, please describe them and suggest where we might find additional information on the effort.

8. Please send us the following (if you have them):

   a) Written definition of early learning standards
   b) Legislation regarding early learning standards
   c) Instruments developed and/or a list of instruments used
   d) Any reports on early learning standards (including general reports on readiness or reports on data in your state)
   e) Is any of this information available on the Web? If so, please include the address.

Send all information to:

Teachers College/Columbia University
ATTN: Vickie Frelow
Box 226
525 West 120th Street
New York, NY 10027

Once we have collected the data via phone interviews, we will post a report from survey results on the SERVE web page. We will send you an e-mail notice that the report has been posted. You will be able to find it at **www.serve.org**.

## APPENDIX B

### Letter of Introduction to Respondents

October 2001

Address
Address
Address

Dear :

SERVE is collaborating with the Center for Children and Families at Teachers College at Columbia University and the National Association for the Education of Young Children to conduct a national survey to document how states are currently developing and defining early learning standards for children from birth through kindergarten entry. Although there has been some effort to study early learning standards at the national level, we know very little about what is happening in individual states. This study will provide critical information on each state's efforts to articulate expectations for children's learning before they enter school.

During the next few weeks, we will be contacting state early childhood specialists, state-level child care administrators, and state AEYC presidents to conduct a survey of current policies and practices related to state-level early learning standards. The study will collect information on any effort that a state-level organization has made to define expectations for children's early learning and/or behaviors. These early learning standards may be called *early learning frameworks*, *benchmarks*, *desired results*, *child indicators*, etc. We are including all of the above in our study of *early learning standards*. We hope to talk with individuals in each state to document how states are defining early learning expectations and how the standards are used.

We would like to talk with you on the phone and ask you a few questions regarding your state's policies and practices. Within the next few days, Vickie Frelow or Lynda Hallmark, graduate students at Teachers College, will be contacting you to schedule a convenient interview date and time. We have enclosed a copy of the interview questionnaire so that you might have an opportunity to think about the questions and collect any relevant information. The interview will last approximately 20–30 minutes. Questions regarding your rights as a participant in this project can be answered by calling Dr. Beverly Maddox-Britt, of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, at (336) 334-5878.

If you feel that there is someone else who can provide us with more useful information, we would appreciate his or her name, phone number, and e-mail address. In addition, we ask that you please forward this letter and questionnaire to them, or we will be happy to do so.

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Thank you for your time and assistance in this matter. We know that you maintain a very busy schedule, and we appreciate your willingness to help. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Catherine Scott-Little by phone (800-755-3277) or e-mail (*cscottli@serve.org*).

We hope that you will participate in this study, which we believe will provide important information on how our country is thinking about children's early learning. We plan to post the results of this survey on the SERVE web page (**www.serve.org**) and will notify you as soon as it is available.

Sincerely,

Catherine Scott-Little, Ph.D.
SERVE

Sharon Lynn Kagan, Ed.D.
Teachers College at Columbia University

Mark Ginsberg, Ph.D.
National Association for the Education of Young Children

Enclosure

## APPENDIX C

### Developmental Dimension Descriptions*

**Physical Well-Being and Motor Development**

Physical well-being and motor development includes characteristics of a child's physical development and physical abilities. Elements of children's physical development include the child's overall rate of growth, level of physical fitness, and body physiology. Children's physical abilities include gross motor skills, fine motor skills, oral motor skills, sensorimotor skills, and functional performance.

**Social and Emotional Development**

Social development alludes to children's abilities to form and sustain social relationships with adults and peers. Seen as a key to success in school, socially competent children are able to communicate with adults and understand and identify adult roles. It is also important for children to develop social skills necessary to cooperate with peers and to form and sustain reciprocal friendships. Self-concept, or the traits, habits, abilities, motives, social roles, goals, and values that define how children perceive themselves, is an essential element of both social and emotional development. Likewise, a child's ability to regulate emotions and understand the feelings of others and his/her sense of self-efficacy are central to emotional development.

**Approaches Toward Learning**

Children's general approach toward learning includes their attitudes, habits, and learning styles. Generally a child's approach toward learning is influenced by predispositions that reflect his/her gender, temperament, and cultural patterns and values. Children's learning styles—their openness to and curiosity about new tasks and challenges; their initiative, task persistence, and attentiveness; their approach to reflection and interpretation; their capacity for invention and imagination; and their cognitive approaches to tasks—also influence their approach toward learning.

**Language and Communication**

Language development is the acquisition of linguistic forms and procedures, as well as social rules and customs that guide how children express themselves and understand communications from other persons. Components of language development include an understanding of content, form, and use of language. Verbal language skills, such as listening, speaking, social uses of language, vocabulary and meaning, questioning, and creative uses of language, are important elements of communication. Likewise, emerging literacy skills, such as literature awareness, print awareness, story sense, and writing processes, are essential as well.

**Cognition and General Knowledge**

Cognition and general knowledge include a number of components. The first component is physical knowledge of the properties of objects within the world around the child. Logico-mathematical knowledge, or the relationships created by individuals within their minds between objects, events, or people, is a second component of cognition and general knowledge. Finally, social-conventional knowledge, or awareness of the agreed-upon conventions of society and the school-learned knowledge or conventions, is the third element of cognition and general knowledge. Corresponding abilities include representational thought, problem-solving, mathematical knowledge, social knowledge, and imagination.

* Adapted from Kagan, S. L., Moore, E., & Bredekamp, S. (Eds.). (1995). *Reconsidering children's early development and learning: Toward common views and vocabulary*. Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office.

## APPENDIX D

### Child-Based Outcome Standards Documents

### Arkansas

Arkansas Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education. (1999). *Arkansas Early Childhood Education Framework: Benchmarks with Strategies/Activities for Three and Four Year Old Children*. Little Rock, AR: The Arkansas Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education.

### California

California Department of Education. (2001). *Desired Results for Children and Families: Developmental Continuum of Desired Results, Indicators, and Measures for Children from Birth to 14 Years and Families Served by CDD-funded Center-based Programs and Family Child Care Home Networks*. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Education. Available at
http://www.cde.ca.gov/cyfsbranch/child_development/dr2.htm
(provides a summary of the desired results system) and at
http://www.cde.ca.gov/cyfsbranch/child_development/downloads/Iam.pdf
(provides the indicators that are part of the desired results for children birth through age 14)

### Colorado

Colorado Department of Education. (2000). *Building Blocks to Colorado's Content Standards*. Denver, CO: Colorado Department of Education.
Available at
Reading and Writing:
http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/download/pdf/EC-BldgBlks%20ReadWrit.pdf

Mathematics:
http://www.cde.state.co.us/earlychildhoodconnections/docs/pdf/MathBB.pdf

### Connecticut

Connecticut State Board of Education. (1999). *The Connecticut Framework: Preschool Curricular Goals and Benchmarks*. Hartford, CN: State of Connecticut, State Board of Education. Available at
http://www.state.ct.us/sde/deps/early/Frmwrkbench.pdf

### Florida

Florida Partnership for School Readiness. (2002). *Florida School Readiness Performance Standards for Three-, Four-, and Five-Year-Old Children*. Tallahassee, FL: Florida Partnership for School Readiness. Available at
http://www.myflorida.com/myflorida/government/governorinitiatives/schoolreadiness/pdf/PerformanceStandards3-4-5.pdf

### Georgia

Georgia Office of School Readiness. (2001). *Office of School Readiness, Georgia Pre-K Program Learning Goals*. Atlanta, GA: Office of School Readiness, Georgia Pre-K Program. Available at
http://www.osr.state.ga.us/forms/PreKGoals.PDF

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## Illinois

Illinois State Board of Education. (2002). *Resources on Early Learning: Illinois Early Learning Standards*. Springfield, IL: Illinois State Board of Education, Division of Early Childhood Education. Available at http://www.illinoisearlylearning.org/standards/index.htm

This site describes the standards and provides links to separate files for the introduction to the document and different domains:
Language arts: http://www.illinoisearlylearning.org/standards/languagearts.htm
Mathematics: http://www.illinoisearlylearning.org/standards/math.htm
Science: http://www.illinoisearlylearning.org/standards/science.htm
Social sciences: http://www.illinoisearlylearning.org/standards/socscience.htm
Physical/health: http://www.illinoisearlylearning.org/standards/phydev.htm
Fine arts: http://www.illinoisearlylearning.org/standards/finearts.htm
Foreign languages: http://www.illinoisearlylearning.org/standards/foreignlang.htm
Social/emotional: http://www.illinoisearlylearning.org/standards/socemodev.htm

## Indiana

Indiana Department of Education. (2002). *Foundations for Young Children to the Indiana Academic Standards*. Indianapolis, IN: Indiana Department of Education, Division of Prime Time. Available at http://ideanet.doe.state.in.us/primetime/foundations.html *

This web address is the home page for The Foundations for Young Children to the Indiana Academic Standards. From this site a Word document of the standards can be downloaded at http://paris.doe.state.in.us/downloads/PreschoolFoundations.doc or a PDF is available for the introduction to the document and various domains:
Mathematics: http://ideanet.doe.state.in.us/primetime/pdf/foundationmath.pdf
Physical education: http://ideanet.doe.state.in.us/primetime/pdf/foundationphysed.pdf
Science: http://ideanet.doe.state.in.us/primetime/pdf/foundationscience.pdf
Music: http://ideanet.doe.state.in.us/primetime/pdf/foundationmusic.pdf
Social studies: http://ideanet.doe.state.in.us/primetime/pdf/foundationsocialstudies.pdf
Visual arts: http://ideanet.doe.state.in.us/primetime/pdf/foundationvisualarts.pdf

## Louisiana

Louisiana Department of Education. (2002). *Louisiana Standards for Programs Serving Four-Year-Old Children*. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana Department of Education, Office of Student and School Performance, Division of Student Standards and Assessments.

This document, which includes program and child-based outcome standards, is available at http://www.louisianaschools.net/DOE/asps/home.asp?I=CONTENT (at the bottom of the list of content standards). The child-based outcome standards (i.e., "content standards") section of the document can be accessed at http://www.louisianaschools.net/DOE/assessment/standards/PDFs/PreKStan3.pdf

## Maine

Maine Department of Education. (1997). *Learning Results*. Augusta, ME: Maine Department of Education. Available at http://www.state.me.us/education/lres/lres.htm

Subject areas are found in different files:
Career preparation: http://www.state.me.us/education/lres/career.htm
English/language arts: http://www.state.me.us/education/lres/ela.htm
Health/physical ed: http://www.state.me.us/education/lres/hpe.htm
Modern and classical languages: http://www.state.me.us/education/lres/mcl.htm

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Mathematics: http://www.state.me.us/education/lres/math.htm
Science and technology: http://www.state.me.us/education/lres/st.htm
Social studies: http://www.state.me.us/education/lres/ss.htm
Visual and performing arts: http://www.state.me.us/education/lres/vpa.htm

Maine Department of Education. (1999). *Birth to Five Early Learning Results.* Augusta, ME: Maine Department of Education.

## Maryland

Maryland State Department of Education. (2002). *MSDE Representative Examples Manual Prekindergarten and Kindergarten Content Standards.* Baltimore, MD: Maryland State Department of Education.

Maryland State Department of Education. (2001). *The Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR) "Readiness" Outcomes and Indicators.* Baltimore, MD: Maryland State Department of Education. Available at http://www.mdk12.org/instruction/ensure/MMSR/MMSRDE1_toc.html *

Individual domains can be found at the following:
Physical well-being and motor development:
http://www.mdk12.org/instruction/ensure/MMSR/MMSRDE1_1.html
Social and emotional development:
http://www.mdk12.org/instruction/ensure/MMSR/MMSRDE1_2.html
Approaches toward learning: http://www.mdk12.org/instruction/ensure/MMSR/MMSRDE1_3.html
Language and literacy development:
http://www.mdk12.org/instruction/ensure/MMSR/MMSRDE1_4.html
Cognition and general knowledge:
http://www.mdk12.org/instruction/ensure/MMSR/MMSRDE1_5.html

## Massachusetts

Massachusetts Department of Education. (2001). *Massachusetts Curriculum Framework.* Malden, MA: Massachusetts Department of Education. Available at http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html

Subject areas are available at:
Arts: http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/arts/1099.pdf
English/language arts: http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/ela/0601.pdf
Foreign languages: http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/foreign/1999.pdf
Comprehensive health: http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/health/1999/1099.pdf
Mathematics: http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/math/2000/final.pdf
History and social science: http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/hss/1022prepub.pdf
Science and technology/engineering: http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/scitech/2001/0501.pdf

Massachusetts Board of Education, Early Childhood Advisory Council. (In process). *Early Childhood Program Standards for Center-Based Programs for Three- and Four-Year Olds.* Draft standards available at http://www.doe.mass.edu/els/ or at http://www.doe.mass.edu/els/rfp_2001/71301.pdf *

## Michigan

Michigan State Board of Education. (1992). *Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Prekindergarten Through Second Grade.* Lansing, MI: Michigan State Board of Education, Early Childhood Education, Parenting, and Comprehensive School Health Unit.

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## Minnesota

Minnesota Department of Children, Families, & Learning. (2000). *Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of Progress: A Resource Guide*. Roseville, MN: Minnesota Department of Children, Families, & Learning. Available at http://cfl.state.mn.us/ecfi/EARLYCHI.PDF

## Mississippi

Mississippi Department of Education. (2001). *Mississippi Pre-kindergarten Curriculum Including Benchmarks, Informal Assessments and Suggested Teaching Strategies*. Jackson, MS: Mississippi Department of Education. Available at http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/ACAD/ID/curriculum/LAER/MsPreK.pdf

## Missouri

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Early Childhood Section. (2001). *Missouri Pre-K Literacy Standards*. Jefferson City, MO. Available at http://www.dese.state.mo.us/divimprove/fedprog/earlychild/pdf/PREKSTANDARDS.pdf

## New Jersey

New Jersey State Department of Education. (2000). *Early Childhood Education Program Expectations: Standards of Quality*. Trenton, NJ: New Jersey State Department of Education.

New Jersey's standards are being revised. A draft of the revised early learning standards is available at http://www.state.nj.us/njded/ece/expectations/2002/expectations.htm *

## New Mexico

University of New Mexico Center for Family and Community Partnerships. (2000). *Developmental Milestones in the Focused Portfolio Assessment System*. Information on Focused Portfolio Assessment System available at: http://www.newassessment.org/public/assessments/AndMore/FocusedPortfolio.cfm

## New York

The University of the State of New York & The State Education Department. (2002). *Early Literacy Guidance Prekindergarten – Grade 3*. Albany, NY: The State Education Department. Available at http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/ciai/ela/early.pdf

## Ohio

Ohio Department of Education. (2000). *Connections: An Early Childhood Education Curriculum Framework for Continuity*. Columbus, OH: Ohio Department of Education. Available at http://www.ode.state.oh.us/ece/connections/connecti.pdf
(Early learning standards are embedded in the document.)

## Oklahoma

Oklahoma State Department of Education. (1996). *Developmental Skills*. Oklahoma City, OK: Oklahoma State Department of Education. Available at http://title3.sde.state.ok.us/early/Developmental.htm

## Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Department of Education & Pennsylvania Association of Intermediate Units. (2001). *Early Childhood Learning Continuum Indicators*. Harrisburg, PA: Pennsylvania Department of Education. Available at http://www.pde.state.pa.us/nclb/lib/nclb/earlychildhoodcontinuum.pdf

## Rhode Island

Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2002). *Rhode Island Early Learning Standards*. Providence, RI: Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Available at http://www.ridoe.net/child_family/earlychild/RI_Standards_Complete_Document.pdf1

## South Carolina

South Carolina State Department of Education, Office of Curriculum and Standards. (2001). *Mathematics Curriculum Standards*. Columbia, SC: South Carolina State Department of Education. Available at http://www.myscschools.com/offices/cso/mathematics/standards.htm (with separate PDF's for specific mathematics standards)

English/language arts available at
http://www.myscschools.com/offices/cso/english_la/standards/grade_band_pk-2.pdf *

## Texas

Texas Education Agency. (1999). *Prekindergarten Curriculum Guidelines*. Austin, TX: Texas Education Agency. Available at
http://www.tea.state.tx.us/curriculum/early/prekguide.pdf#xml=http://www.tea.state.tx.uswww.tea.state.tx.us/cgi/texis/webinator/search/xml.txt?query=prekindergarten&db=db&id=a041babb18155c59

## Utah

Utah State Office of Education. (2000). *Pre-K Standards (Guidelines)*. Salt Lake City, UT: Utah State Office of Education. Available at http://www.usoe.k12.ut.us/curr/early/standards.htm

## Virginia

Virginia Department of Education. (2002). *Virginia's Foundation Blocks for Early Learning: Guidelines for Literacy and Mathematics*. Richmond, VA: Office of Elementary Instructional Services, Virginia Department of Education. * Available at
http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Instruction/Elem_M/FoundationBlocks.pdf

## Vermont

State of Vermont, Department of Education. (1993). *Vermont's Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities*. Montpelier, VT: Vermont Department of Education. Available at http://www.state.vt.us/educ/new/html/pubs/framework.html

## Washington

Children's Services, Community Services Division, Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development. (1999). *Washington State's Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program Outcomes Selected for New Evaluation Design*. Olympia, WA: Washington Community Trade and Economic Development Department. Described at
http://www.ocd.wa.gov/info/csd/waeceap/Child_Outcomes/ChildOutcomes.htm

Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. (2001). *Birth to Five Framework for Achieving the Essential Academic Learning Requirements in Reading, Writing and Communication*. Olympia, WA: Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.
Hard copies can be ordered at www.k12.wa.us/publications (item number AS1019 under the subsection entitled "Academic Standards and Assessments").

## Wyoming

Wyoming Department of Education. *Early Childhood Readiness Standards*. Cheyenne, WY: Wyoming Department of Education. Available at

http://www.k12.wy.us/specialprograms/Docs/early_childhood_standards.pdf *

* Document published subsequent to data collection for this study and therefore is not included in the data analysis for this report.

Research Report

# Expanded Learning Opportunities National Leadership Area

**June 2003**

# STANDARDS FOR PRESCHOOL CHILDREN'S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT: WHO HAS STANDARDS, HOW WERE THEY DEVELOPED, AND HOW ARE THEY USED?

Executive Summary

**By**
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SERVE
*Improving Learning through Research & Development*

PS 03 712

**STANDARDS FOR PRESCHOOL CHILDREN'S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT: WHO HAS STANDARDS, HOW WERE THEY DEVELOPED, AND HOW ARE THEY USED?**

SERVE™

*Improving Learning through Research & Development*

In Association with the School of Education
University of North Carolina at Greensboro

2003

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# STANDARDS FOR PRESCHOOL CHILDREN'S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT: WHO HAS STANDARDS, HOW WERE THEY DEVELOPED, AND HOW ARE THEY USED?

## Executive Summary

While it has long been recognized that early care and education programs have great influence over how children develop and what they learn before they enter kindergarten, traditionally the field has not had standards to define precisely the characteristics or skills programs should foster in children during the preschool years. Until recently, program standards have been the focus of efforts to develop standards. Within the last decade, however, an increasing number of state-level programs have developed standards to define expectations for what young children should know and be able to do. For purposes of this report, we will use the term "child-based outcome standards" to clearly distinguish these from program standards. It should be noted that these standards are sometimes termed "early learning standards."

In order to gain a better understanding of the child-based outcome standards that have been developed by state-level organizations across the country, SERVE partnered with Dr. Sharon Lynn Kagan of Teachers College, Columbia University to conduct a national study. The purposes of the study were to:

Identify which states have developed child-based outcome standards.
Provide descriptive information about the nature of the child-based outcome standards.
Provide data about the process used to develop child-based outcome standards.
Explore how the child-based outcome standards are (or will be) used.

This Executive Summary provides a brief description of key findings from the study. Further information is available in the full report. A second report that provides more detailed information about the nature of the standards themselves is forthcoming.

### Background

Historically the early care and education field has chosen not to articulate specific performance expectations for what children should know and be able to do in the form of standards for a number of good reasons. The nature of young children's development does not lend itself to such standards. Development at this age is highly individualized and extremely dependent on the environment and the types of experiences a child has had. Given that children's experiences at this age are extremely diverse, it is difficult to impose standardized expectations for development. Furthermore, development often occurs in spurts rather than unfolding evenly and uniformly across developmental areas. With these considerations in mind, the field generally has been hesitant to develop child-based outcome standards for fear that they might be misused.

Despite these concerns, a number of developments in the late 1990s led many state-level organizations to develop documents that describe expectations for preschool children's performance. First is the advent of standards-based education in K–12 education. Almost all states have developed content standards for their K–12 education systems. It is, therefore, not surprising that such attention to content standards for older children has led policymakers and

others to question what is expected of children's learning before they enter kindergarten. Additionally, the nation has made a tremendous investment of resources in early care and education. At the national level, programs like Head Start received tremendous funding increases in the 1990s. On the state level, funding for pre-kindergarten initiatives totaled approximately $1.7 billion in 1998–1999, up approximately $1 billion from 1992–1993 (Schulman, Blank, & Ewen, 1999). According to a recent report by *Education Week*, 39 states plus the District of Columbia operate state-funded pre-kindergarten programs and 21 states plus the District of Columbia provide supplemental funding to expand Head Start services available in their states (Doherty, 2002). With investments of this magnitude in the care and education of children before they come to kindergarten, it is perhaps inevitable that some attention be paid to what children are learning in the programs.

These factors have led to significant efforts on the federal and national level to be more explicit about expectations for what preschool children will learn and what skills they will develop. In 1998, Congress mandated that Head Start begin collecting data on child outcomes. As a result, the Head Start Bureau developed the Head Start Outcomes Framework. The Framework includes eight developmental domains, seven domain elements, and one hundred examples of more specific indicators of children's skills, abilities, knowledge, and behaviors. Head Start programs are required to collect data on children's progress toward meeting the specified outcomes. Additionally, in 2002, President George Bush introduced *Good Start, Grow Smart*, an early childhood initiative that encourages states to develop quality criteria for early care and education programs. Included in the initiative are plans for states to develop voluntary early learning guidelines for preschool children's language and literacy development. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education (NAECS/SDE) recognized the increasing emphasis on standards for children's learning and developed a position statement to outline features of "developmentally effective" standards (NACYC & NAECS/SDE, 2002). The position statement addresses the process for developing early learning standards, their content, and implementation of the standards.

In this study, we sought to explore just these issues—how states across the country have defined expectations for children, what content has been included, and how the standards are being used. This analysis is extremely timely, especially given the increasing attention early learning standards are receiving with the *Good Start, Grow Smart* initiative.

## Methodology

Data for this report were collected from two sources: interviews with key informants in each state and a review of child-based outcome standards documents. In order to gain a complete picture of efforts to develop state-level child-based outcome standards, we used a standardized protocol to interview several people in each state: the early childhood specialist in the state department of education, the chief child care administrator in the state's lead child care agency, and the president of the state NAEYC affiliate. A total of 177 people were contacted, and 77 interviews were completed.

## Findings

Our findings are presented in three basic categories: 1) a review of states that have child-based outcome standards and a description of what is included in the standards, 2) a discussion of the

process used to develop child-based outcome standards, and 3) a description of how states use or implement the standards. It should be noted that our research revealed considerable variability between (and in some cases within) states in how the child-based standards process has unfolded. In searching for patterns or themes, the research team found it necessary to classify states along certain elements. In doing so, we may have unintentionally minimized the uniqueness of a particular state's child-based outcome standards or its process. Likewise, we typically refer to a "state" as one unit of analysis when, in some cases, there may be multiple child-based outcome standards activities within a state. In these cases, we have tried to note this caveat, but, nonetheless, there may be intra-state activities that have been minimized in the discussion. Finally, it should be noted that the child-based outcome standards development process is just that in most states—a process states are currently engaged in. Our data, therefore, are dated before they are even reported. Our interviews were completed between November 2001 and May 2002. The data reflect where the states were at the time of the interviews. We are fully aware that in many states the standards development process may have progressed beyond the point that is reflected in this report. Given these provisos, we now turn to the findings of the study.

### *States With Child-Based Outcome Standards and What Is Included in the Standards*

Results of the analysis of the standards documents themselves, along with the survey data, not only revealed patterns or trends across states but also indicated that there is great variation in who has standards and what they look like. The following summary presents data on where states are in the standards development process, what is included in the standards, what states have chosen to call the standards, and how they have made linkages to their K–12 standards.

#### Where States Are in the Standards Development Process

Survey data revealed that 27 states had standards covering at least one developmental domain or content area for preschool-age children. These states had a child-based outcome standards document published and available for review at the time of the interview. Two states—Maine and Washington—had more than one set of standards. An additional 12 states plus the District of Columbia were in the process of developing standards. This means that almost 40 states have or are developing child-based outcome standards.

Table 1

*Status of Child-Based Outcome Standards in States as of May 2002*

| Have standards that have been officially adopted or endorsed | Have standards that have not been officially adopted or endorsed | Standards in process | No standards |
|---|---|---|---|
| Arkansas | California | Arizona | Alabama |
| Connecticut | Colorado | Delaware | Alaska |
| Florida | Louisiana | Hawaii | Idaho |
| Georgia | Missouri | Indiana | Iowa |
| Illinois | Ohio | Kentucky | Kansas |
| Maine | Oklahoma | Nevada | Montana |
| Maryland | Pennsylvania | North Carolina | Nebraska |
| Massachusetts | Rhode Island | Oregon | New Hampshire |
| Michigan | | Tennessee | North Dakota |
| Minnesota | | Virginia | South Dakota |
| Mississippi | | Washington, DC | West Virginia |
| New Jersey | | Wisconsin | |
| New Mexico | | Wyoming | |
| New York | | | |
| South Carolina | | | |
| Texas | | | |
| Utah | | | |
| Vermont | | | |
| Washington | | | |

The research team was interested in whether standards that have been developed have been formally adopted or endorsed by a governing board or governmental agency. In most states—19 out of 27 states with child-based outcome standards—this was the case. We discovered, however, that classifying published child-based outcome standards as either adopted/endorsed or not adopted/endorsed creates a deceptively simple picture of where states are in the process of developing standards. Illustrating how the child-based standards process is a moving target, the data revealed that states with published standards were quite often still engaged in the standards development process. For example, four states—Colorado, Maine, Missouri, and South Carolina—had child-based outcome standards covering a limited number of developmental domains and were developing additional standards to cover other domains. New Jersey, Ohio, and Utah had child-based outcome standards and were in the process of revising them. Four states with published child-based outcome standards were in the process of developing a second set of standards, either to cover a younger age range (Georgia and South Carolina) or to more clearly define expectations for preschool children in cases where pre-K standards were included with K–12 standards (Massachusetts and Vermont). The development of child-based outcome standards is a relatively new phenomena (most of the standards had been developed since 1999), and a number of states are currently engaged in the process.

What States Have Addressed in Their Standards

Data revealed that states with published child-based outcome standards documents have taken a variety of approaches in who and what is included in the standards but relatively few have addressed the needs of diverse learners. In terms of whom the standards address, states have most commonly developed standards to address expectations for children during the preschool years (ages three to five). We found that the majority have been designed to address a fairly broad age range rather than one specific age or point in time, such as entry to kindergarten. Specifically, respondents from 17 states indicated that their states' standards are for children between the ages of three and five. Standards in six additional states (Maryland, Missouri, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Washington—ECEAP) describe expectations for children at the completion of pre-K or the beginning of kindergarten. Child-based outcome standards in four states—California, Maine, New Mexico, and Washington—include infants and toddlers.

We found that, overall, states have developed child-based outcome standards to cover a variety of developmental domains and subject areas. Language and literacy development are the most common domain to be included in child-based outcome standards—all states except one had standards to address this domain and that state was in the process of developing standards for language and literacy. Approaches to learning and social/emotional development were the areas least commonly addressed in the child-based outcome standards. Seven of the 29 sets of child-based outcome standards addressed approaches to learning, and 19 sets addressed social-emotional development. This finding is particularly significant given the data that indicate that preschool children's development in the social-emotional domain is considered to be the foundation for many elements of development in later years and is seen as particularly important for their success later in school (National Research Council & Institute of Medicine, 2000).

Although interview data indicated that the child-based outcome standards are applicable to all children, a review of the standards documents indicated that there has been limited guidance on how the standards are to be adapted for children with varying characteristics, including children with disabilities. This is significant given that we expect children's development to vary greatly at this age. The National Research Council's report entitled *Eager to Learn* points out that children's language, cognitive, social, and physical development are greatly influenced by culture. Furthermore, individual differences associated with special circumstances, such as disabilities or speaking a language other than English, impact development significantly. Incorporating such variation, which is to be expected with children of this age, into the use of child-based outcome standards is an important issue. Given that standards lend themselves to a more uniform view of expectations for children's growth and development, how are the standards being applied to all children? A review of the standards documents indicated that there has been limited guidance on how the standards are to be adapted for children from various cultures or with disabilities. Similarly, it was unclear from most of the documents how the standards would be utilized with children whose primary language is not English.

## Language Used to Describe the Standards

States have chosen to use a variety of titles to identify their child-based outcome standards. Titles that include the words "standards," "benchmarks," and/or "frameworks" are relatively common. Some states (such as California's "Desired Results" and Colorado's "Building Blocks") have unique titles for their standards.

When the nomenclature given to the individual child-based outcome standards, rather than the standards document as a whole, is examined, "indicators" and "standards" are the most common titles used. Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Utah, and Vermont refer to the descriptions of skills/knowledge children should develop as "standards." "Indicators" is the term used by California, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, and Pennsylvania. Other terms used for the individual standards include "benchmarks" (Arkansas, Illinois, Mississippi), "milestones" (New Mexico), "learning goals" (Georgia, Rhode Island) or "goals" (Texas), "suggested characteristics" (Washington—OSPI), "outcomes" (Washington—ECEAP), "program goals" (Connecticut), "early competencies" (New York), "expectations" (New Jersey), and "developmental skills" (Oklahoma). Clearly the nomenclature used within the standards varies by state.

### Linkage With the K–12 Standards

Responses to the survey indicated that it was important for child-based outcome standards to be linked to states' K–12 standards. Each of the respondents reported that his or her state's child-based outcome standards were linked or related to the K–12 standards in some way. A review of the documents indicated that states have used different approaches to express this linkage. In 15 states, the linkage is evident in the document—specific child-based outcome standards are cross-referenced with K–12 standards. In other states, the linkage is less evident, with the child-based outcome standards using similar categories or headings or making reference to the K–12 standards in the document's introduction. Subsequent analyses indicated that the child-based outcome standards that were more explicitly linked to K–12 standards appeared to be more academically oriented and to include the word "standards" in their titles more often than the child-based outcome standards that were less explicitly linked to K–12 standards.

## *The Process States Have Used to Develop Their Child-Based Outcome Standards*

We were interested in how the process of developing the child-based outcome standards unfolded within the states—how did it get started, who was involved, and how did it evolve? Results from the surveys and data from the standards documents were used to develop an understanding of the process.

### How the Process Started

Over half of the states with child-based outcome standards (14) started the process because of an informal recognition that the standards were needed. Key players within the state recognized that child-based outcome standards could be beneficial (or in some cases might eventually be required by policymakers) and started the process. Nine states started the process in response to legislation passed in their states, and in four cases, child-based outcome standards were developed as a result of a departmental order. The child-based outcome standards developed as a result of a legislative order were much more likely to have been adopted or endorsed by a governing board or governmental agency.

### Players Involved in the Standards Development Process

Although the process of developing child-based outcome standards usually included representatives from a number of constituencies, state departments of education have typically been the lead agency for the standards development process. Data indicated that early childhood

specialists within state departments of education assumed multiple roles and functions in the standards development process, typically developing the plan and then leading the process. A wide variety of partners were included in the development process in most states—representatives from local school districts, departments of social services/human services, special education, higher education, parents, and various other community agencies. Often the standards development process built upon partnerships or relationships that had been formed as a result of other early childhood initiatives already in process.

Input from the public was important for the process in many states. Public forums were held to invite broad input from the community. Focus groups and public comment periods were also used to gather feedback on the work of the committee. In summary, data revealed that respondents from most states described the standards development process as highly inclusive and requiring the input and advice from a broad spectrum of stakeholders.

How the Process Evolved

Data indicated that the standards process can be lengthy and complex. The typical time frame for developing the standards was one to two years, although one state reported that the process took five years. However, as noted above, several states with standards are still in the development process, either adding to or revising what is in place. Other states may have standards documents and are now focused on how they are used. Indeed, the process for developing child-based outcome standards is complex and can be characterized more as a marathon than a sprint.

Funding for the standards development process came from a variety of sources, with the typical state combining funds from two or more sources. Respondents reported that federal funding streams, such as the Child Care Development Block Grant and IDEA funds, were used to support the work. Twenty-three of the 27 states reported receiving funding from state agencies and departments, in particular state departments of education. In some states, private sources of funding, such as grants from foundations or corporations, were utilized. Respondents from three states indicated that no specific funds were earmarked to support the effort.

State work groups consulted a variety of resources when developing their child-based outcome standards. A state's own K–12 standards were the most commonly reported resource used in the development process. Respondents from all 27 states with child-based outcome standards indicated they had looked at their own state's K–12 standards during the standards development process. States also reviewed the work of various developmental theorists, national frameworks or standards (such as the Head Start Outcome Framework or the work of the National Education Goals Panel), the National Association for the Education of Young Children's document describing developmentally appropriate practices, and various assessments or early childhood curricula. States also sought to learn from each other. Eighteen of the states indicated that they had looked at child-based outcome standards from another state, with Connecticut being the state most often referenced. Interestingly, a number of respondents reported their states had used standards from other countries or provinces as a reference during the process, particularly British Columbia's early learning standards.

*The Status of Child-Based Outcome Standards Activities in Other States*

Respondents from 12 states plus the District of Columbia indicated that their states did not have published child-based outcome standards but were in the process of developing such standards at

the time of the interview. The status of standards development activities in these states ranged from states having just formed a committee to think about the process, to states that were just short of finalizing and publishing standards. Three of the "in process states" plus the District of Columbia had draft child-based outcome standards that were nearly ready for publication—Arizona, Indiana, and Wyoming. Kentucky, Nevada, Tennessee, and Virginia had made significant progress in the standards development process. Respondents from the majority of these states indicated that they expected their standards to be completed by the end of 2002 or during 2003. The five remaining states—Delaware, Hawaii, North Carolina, Oregon, and Wisconsin—had just begun to develop child-based outcome standards. Respondents from these states typically did not provide an expected completion date for their states' standards.

Survey responses from these "in-process" states indicate that they are engaged in a process that is relatively similar to that of states with published child-based outcome standards. In most cases, the state department of education is taking the lead in the process and has included partners from a variety of stakeholder groups. Funding from a variety of state and federal sources is being used to support the process. Also, similar to the states with child-based outcome standards, respondents from the "in process" states reported that considerable attention is being given to the state's K–12 standards in developing child-based outcome standards.

Respondents from 11 states (Alabama, Alaska, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, North Dakota, South Dakota, and West Virginia) indicated that their states did not have child-based outcome standards and were not currently engaged in the process of developing such standards. Data from the surveys revealed, however, that these particular states not only have a variety of early childhood initiatives underway but also have a variety of reasons for not having child-based outcome standards. Reasons for not having started a standards development process included a range of practical, political, and philosophical rationales.

### *Implementation of Child-Based Outcome Standards*

Having examined which states have standards and how they were developed, we turn now to a discussion of how the child-based outcome standards are (or are intended to be) used. The research team examined where and how the child-based outcome standards were intended to be used, how they are being disseminated, and the degree to which programs are held accountable for implementing the standards.

#### Where and How Child-Based Outcome Standards Are Intended to Be Used

Respondents overwhelmingly indicated that the child-based outcome standards were developed for publicly funded preschool programs, typically for the state-funded pre-kindergarten program. Twenty-two of the 29 sets of standards were intended to be used by state-funded early care and education programs. Even though the child-based outcome standards in these states were developed for particular programs, most of the respondents indicated that their states were making the standards available to a broad array of programs, with hopes that other early care and education programs would use them. A small sub-set of states—Connecticut, Minnesota, Missouri, Rhode Island, Utah, and Washington—intentionally developed child-based outcome standards for broader target audiences rather than a particular program. Respondents from these states reported that the standards were developed for use in all early childhood programs across the state, including state-funded pre-kindergarten, private child care, Head Start, and family child

care homes, as well as parents in several cases. The intention in these states was to create a document that would be applicable in a wide array of settings rather than one particular program.

Respondents identified several purposes for the child-based outcome standards. In every state, respondents indicated that an intended purpose of the standards was to improve curriculum and instruction. The expectation was that standards defining what skills and characteristics are expected of children before they enter kindergarten would help teachers and care providers better know what types of learning experiences to provide for children. The next most commonly cited purpose for developing child-based outcome standards was to improve assessment, followed by to improve children's readiness for school, and then by expectations that the child-based outcome standards would improve the overall quality of early childhood programs in the state.

Dissemination of Child-Based Outcome Standards

In order to facilitate the use of the child-based outcome standards, respondents indicated that their states had undertaken a number of dissemination and support activities. The most common dissemination strategy was to mail the document to individuals and programs. In some cases, states completed an initial mass mailing to large numbers of programs and individuals, but the most common method was to mail the document to individuals or programs when requested. More "non-traditional" methods of disseminating the child-based outcome standards included providing downloadable versions of the child-based outcome standards on a website (18 states), developing a video demonstrating the standards (California, Illinois, Mississippi, Utah), preparing "toolkits" or guidebooks on the standards (Missouri, Pennsylvania), and producing informational posters (Missouri). Connecticut has established demonstration classrooms in lab schools where the child-based outcome standards are modeled. In all states, respondents indicated that the lead agency for the development process was also responsible for dissemination of the child-based outcome standards.

In order for child-based outcome standards to be used, early childhood personnel must know about them and ideally be trained in how to use them. Respondents in each state indicated that some training was available to support the use of the standards. Much of the training, however, was done as "one shot" presentations at workshops and conferences. A few states have incorporated the child-based outcome standards into their higher education courses, and several respondents reported that their states had developed a "train the trainer" model. In an effort to maximize fidelity in the use of the child-based outcome standards, Colorado took a unique approach of only disseminating the standards to persons who had been trained by a trainer who had met specific criteria related to the child-based outcome standards. Although respondents indicated that states have undertaken a variety of types of training and technical assistance relative to the child-based outcome standards, it seems that the investment in the development process had, at the time of the interview, outpaced efforts to provide support for their use.

Holding Programs Accountable for Child-Based Outcome Standards

States varied in the degree to which they held programs accountable for using the child-based outcome standards. In the case of 21 out of the 29 sets of child-based outcome standards, respondents indicated that programs were expected or required to use the standards. The words respondents used to describe these expectations ranged from "mandated," to "required," to "suggested," to "expected." "Expecting" child-based outcome standards to be used might mean that the state had provided training to all teachers within the targeted program or that use of the

child-based outcome standards was a stipulation of the program's funding. The degree of "expectation" tied to the child-based outcome standards varies from state to state, and within states, it can vary from program to program.

Respondents from eight states—Connecticut, Minnesota, Missouri, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Texas, Utah, and Washington—indicated that their child-based outcome standards were voluntary. Reasons why the child-based outcome standards might be voluntary varied. Several of these states developed their standards as a resource for a wide variety of programs rather than a subset of publicly funded programs and, therefore, did not have the authority to require that they be used. Two states indicated that their standards were developed in response to an informal recognition that there was a need for such a document rather than a legislative or departmental mandate, so there was no impetus for required use. Finally, two states indicated that their standards are voluntary due to the political context of their state. Programs are controlled more locally in one case (Texas), and there was no publicly funded program within which to require the standards be used in another (Utah).

The data clearly indicate that child-based outcome standards are not required universally and are not enacted uniformly within states. Our analysis indicates that the use of standards is required in a subset of early care and education programs, and these are heavily publicly supported. The programs where standards are required tend to serve at-risk populations, including children from low-income families, families where English is not the dominant language, or those at-risk due to disability. Potential reasons for why the standards are required in only a subset of programs may stem from philosophical views about children this age and/or practical considerations. From the philosophical view point, young children have long been viewed differently from school-age children. There are some who see the responsibility of supporting development of children prior to school entry as a family responsibility, and standards for development at this age may be seen as the state or public institutions "over stepping the boundaries." Additionally, development of children this age is seen as qualitatively distinct from development of school-age children—with greater variability and unevenness—and may not be seen as applicable for standards, which tend to lend themselves to a more uniform view of development. Finally, from the practical standpoint, child-based outcome standards may have been developed for a subset of programs for very practical reasons. Because child-based outcome standards are a relatively new development in the field, starting with implementation in a subset of publicly funded programs is a way to pilot the process. Furthermore, states may not have the resources nor the authority to implement the child-based outcome standards on a broader basis. No matter what the explanation, the result is that the child-based outcome standards are being applied differentially, with programs serving largely at-risk children being much more likely to have standards than other programs.

*How programs are going to be held accountable.* The research team sought to discern the degree to which the child-based outcome standards are to be used for accountability purposes, either for program accountability or for holding individual children responsible for specific content. The answer to the latter is that *none* of the standards are being or are intended to be used to make accountability decisions for children—no respondent indicated that his or her state's standards would be used to make promotion or placement decisions about children. However, the intended uses of child-based outcome standards for program decisions presents a much more complex picture of how child-based outcome standards are (or will be) used.

States appeared to take two different approaches to ensuring that programs use the child-based outcome standards: 1) requiring alignment of curriculum with the standards or 2) requiring

evidence that children are learning skills and developing characteristics consistent with those outlined in the standards. Respondents from Illinois and Louisiana reported that their states will require programs to align their curricula with the child-based outcome standards. The states are looking to see whether programs use the child-based outcome standards in their curriculum planning, not whether children develop the skills and characteristics specified by the standards.

Ten states are developing child assessment systems that can provide data on children's skills and characteristics related to the child-based outcome standards. These states vary in the degree to which the child assessments are linked to the child-based outcome standards. In California, Maine, New Mexico, and Washington, child-based outcome standards are actually the basis for a data collection system. The child assessments correspond directly to the child-based outcome standards. Data from the assessments will be used to gauge the progress children within the program are making toward the skills and characteristics described in the child-based outcome standards. Four states—Florida, Georgia, Michigan, and Ohio—expect programs to use their child-based outcome standards and collect program evaluation data that are logically, but not directly, linked to use of the child-based outcome standards. Maryland and Minnesota are developing or implementing assessment systems to collect general information on children's readiness when they enter school. Presumably, this type of school readiness data could shed some light on the degree to which children's skills and abilities are consistent with the child-based outcome standards. Data from the interviews indicate that no state was assigning consequences, such as reduced funding, based on a program's success in demonstrating that children within the program are making progress toward the child-based outcome standards. However, respondents seemed to indicate that it is possible that such consequences may someday be associated with the degree to which the program documents that enrolled children are developing the skills and characteristics described in the child-based outcome standards.

## Discussion and Recommendations

Child-based outcome standards are clearly becoming an important part of the early care and education systems across the country. Almost 40 states have or are developing child-based outcome standards. With President Bush's *Good Start, Grow Smart* initiative, states will be required to develop voluntary early learning guidelines as part of their administration of Child Care and Development Block Grant funds. Child-based outcome standards will no doubt become an even more important element of the early care and education system. In states where child-based outcome standards exist (or are in process), there is potential for additional sets of standards to be developed or the current standards applied to a wider range of programs.

Given the increasing number and importance of such standards, we feel it necessary to extrapolate recommendations based on what we learned from this research. The following is a summary of our recommendations. We elaborate on the rationale and explanation for each of the recommendations in the full report that accompanies this Executive Summary.

> **Develop an agreed-upon nomenclature to describe these standards:** There is significant confusion within the field related to the language used to describe child-based outcome standards. Further complicating the dialogue regarding standards, there is confusion between types of standards—child-based outcome standards, program standards, etc. We recommend that the title "early learning standards" be used for child-based outcome standards and that additional work be done to further define the nomenclature used to identify elements of early learning standards.

**Give serious consideration as to how child-based outcome standards should be developed and applied with children from different cultures and special circumstances, such as children with disabilities and English language learners:** Data from the surveys clearly reveal that the child-based outcome standards are intended to be applicable to all children, including children from special circumstances. Precisely how children from diverse backgrounds are to be included in the standards is much less clearly articulated. We recommend that a national panel or task force be convened to address the relationship between universal standards and the unique needs of children from special circumstances. Such a group should address the content and application of standards for children from various cultural backgrounds, children with disabilities, and English language learners in particular, with the goal of advancing the expectations and learning outcomes for all children.

**Address a range of developmental domains within child-based outcome standards:** Data from this study indicate that some child-based outcome standards address only a limited number of the developmental domains identified by the National Education Goals Panel as important components of children's development. Specifically, the social-emotional domain and approaches to learning domain were not addressed in a number of child-based outcome standards. However, data from the National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (2000) report *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development* clearly indicate that development in these domains during the early years is critical to children's later success. Given the potency of the standards to drive instruction in programs, to guide pre- and in-service training, and to serve as accountability instruments, it is critical that all five domains be included in child-based outcome standards. If not, there is strong likelihood that the curriculum will be weighted toward domains that, while critically important, do not reflect the integration and richness of children's early learning.

**Give careful consideration to the purpose for which the child-based outcome standards will be used and how they will be developed:** The task of developing child-based outcome standards is extremely complex. States should clearly articulate why they are developing standards at the beginning of the process and allow sufficient time for the process (data indicate at least a year). States should also make thoughtful decisions about who should be included in the development process to ensure that key stakeholders are represented and that there is sufficient expertise (both in terms of child development and knowledge of the program to which the standards will be applied) to generate child-based outcome standards that are valid and useful. Additional key considerations include the political and historical context within which the standards are being developed, the age range that the child-based outcome standards will address, how the standards will link to the state's K–12 standards, and the personnel, processes, and fiscal resources that will be necessary to support the development process.

**Commit significant resources to planning for and supporting the use of child-based outcome standards in the field:** It is clear that much work has gone into developing the child-based outcome standards. Data also indicate that much more work is needed to determine how these standards will be used and to provide support

to ensure they are used appropriately. Implementation of these child-based outcome standards raises a number of complex issues that must be addressed. Since in most states the child-based outcome standards are not being applied universally, what are the long-term impacts of some programs having standards and others not? Potentially, states may have more than one set of child-based outcome standards, which in some cases may overlap in the age-range covered. Additionally, the federal Head Start Outcome Framework is being applied across states. What are the policy and practical ramifications of multiple sets of standards? Will the standards be voluntary or are programs expected or required to use them? To what degree will the child-based outcome standards be monitored and enforced? Finally, what supports will be provided to programs and teachers to promote the use of the child-based outcome standards in a manner consistent with their purpose? Harkening to experiences in standards-based reform in the K–12 education system, introducing child-based outcome standards into early childhood settings is clearly a change for the field and will require significant professional development for the people most affected by the standards—the teachers. While some thought has been given to these and other implementation issues, it seems that additional time, personnel, training, and fiscal resources are necessary to foster effective implementation of the child-based outcome standards.

**Capitalize on the emergence of child-based outcome standards as an opportunity to further the dialogue on the relationship between early care and education and the K–12 education system:** There is a need for open and honest discourse around child-based outcome standards and the related system issues they evoke between formal K–12 education and early childhood education. While many states are moving toward universal pre-kindergarten, much of this activity is being conceptualized as another program, not as a means to integrate a system of care AND education for American children. We recommend that sustained opportunities for linkage, research, and policy be developed to promote a system of early care and education that is designed, supported, and implemented in concert with Head Start, child care, and the public schools.

## Conclusion

This study, while directed at child-based outcome standards and their use, has revealed that like many issues in early childhood education, child-based outcome standards cannot stand alone. Their presence, their very being, is enmeshed with larger issues that have characterized the field for decades: equity for children across diverse programs and delivery streams and linkages with public education while retaining a developmental orientation. To understand the challenges associated with creating and implementing child-based outcome standards is to understand the challenges associated with early childhood education. As such, child-based outcome standards—important in their own right—may also be regarded as a critical barometer of American early care and education.

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